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The
MINISTER'S
FIDDLE,
&c.


By JOHN GILKISON.





Lugh Nair

from

Mrs M^e Antyri

Xmas 1894

THE MINISTER'S FIDDLE, &c.

THE
MINISTER'S FIDDLE:

A Book of Verse,

HUMOROUS AND OTHERWISE.

BY
JOHN GILKISON.

GLASGOW :
A. BRYSON & CO., 142 TRONGATE.
1888,

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PREFACE.

IF those who honour me by reading this book of mine should be of opinion, that there is a good deal of the incongruous about it, I can scarcely blame them, for the same idea has occurred to my own mind. I can only say, by way of apology, that the volume was not written with one set purpose, from beginning to end, as most books are nowadays, but written under many different circumstances, and in various moods of mind, not for any definite result at the time, but merely to please my own fancy.

A human being must have a good many different moods and humours during his lifetime : acted and reacted upon as he is, mentally and physically, by his surroundings. As for instance, take myself (there is no modesty required about a preface). I was born in the Gorbals of Glasgow, inheriting from my father most of the peculiarities of that good old locality, and yet I spent most part of my boyhood and youth listening, it might be, one evening to the bleating cry of the mire-snipe in Eskragh bog, Ireland, and the next to the

steeple bells of Hutesontown Parish Church. I have known, and been influenced by, all sorts and conditions of men. I have had at one and the same time close intimacy and friendship with the late Rev. David McRae, total abstainer, and true Christian minister, and George Ewing, artist, and ruling Prince of Bohemia. I have been a member of a U.P. Church Young Men's Mutual Improvement Society on the Thursday nights, and on the Fridays, of an Amateur Dramatic Club. I have known missionaries, music-hall artists, and medical students; and in the days when I cultivated female friendships, I have been intimate with sweet Sabbath-school teachers, careless ballet girls, and tender-hearted members of Dorcas societies. Therefore my book, written as it has been under such influences, cannot well be otherwise than a little incongruous.

So much by way of preface; containing rather too much about myself, perhaps, but is not egotism the spirit of all prefaces?—and the preface, is it not, the high privilege of all authors?—one that the world having granted us so long, cannot now very well take away from us.

J. G.

September, 1888.

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The Minister's Fiddle.



I.

THE RUMOUR.

SOME folk are able at singing a sang,
While some can tell stories that end wi' a bang,
And plenty can spin oot political diddle,
But I'll tell the tale o' the Minister's Fiddle.

His name was the Reverend Reuben Macfarlane,
A guid able chiel at gieing a haurlan,
On ilk Sabbath day, to the powers o' evil,
Tho' on week days a fair spoken body and ceevil ;
And fond o' a crack too, wi' Janet or Tam,
And even, at orra times, fond o' a dram,

But aye wi' discretion,
As became his profession,
Sae kept the respect o' his kirk and his session.
There was just ae bit speckie,
At first licht and fleckie,
A cloud no whit bigger than e'en a man's hand,
But grew till its blackness o'ershadowed the land;
A black, fearsome rumour—guid faith, 'twas nae
riddle—

That the minister played on a sinfu' fiddle!

And the story aye grew,
Till a wonderfu' hue
Of horror made some faces turn fair blue.

And gossips a' whispered through Westbrigend;
From whispering, came boldly to recommend
That this awfu' thing should be brocht 'fore the session,
And dealt wi' according to prayerfu' discretion.

II.

TAMMAS GUNN'S STORY.

'Twas Sabbath morn, and the minister's man
Had thrown wide the yett. And, ere service began,
Some early comers stood roun' the kirkyaird,
Wi' decent black coats and douce faces, prepared
To spend the day as it oucht to be done.
And up at the dykeside stands auld Tammas Gunn,
Wi' four o' the session a' listening roun'
To his tale, as he speaks it in laigh, eager soun'.
Quo' Tam, "Yes, my freens, coming daunerin hame
Wi' my coo.frae the fair, efter buying the same,
And driving her canny—'twas gey late at e'en ;
I had met wi' some cronies I hadna seen
For mony a day, sae when leavin' the fair
We a' had a gill—or, faith, maybe 'twas mair.
Be that as it will, I came cannily hame,
For the coo, the bit beast, was a wee something lame,

And came through the toll, and down to the toun—
And deemin' a' folk in their bed, sleepin' soun'—
When just as I passed by oor minister's manse,
'Guid save us!' quo' I, 'can I be in some trance?'

I heard a queer skirl,

Wi' a ticklesome dirl,

A tune on the fiddle wad mak' the stanes dance.
I rubbit my een, and I lookit a' roun' me,
And there frae the manse, just a wee bit aboon me,
Came oot through the window the wonderfu' soun,'—
The very manse window, that sinfu' tune!
I stood on the road there, like some silly loonart,
And faith, I can tell ye, was fairly dumfoonart!"

Then Elder Munroe, wi' his deep, solemn voice—
"Noo, certes, freens a', we hae nae other choice
But e'en bring this matter before the next meeting
Of Session; and, seeing that time is aye fleeting,
Let's do it at once, without further waiting,
And end a' this gossip and idle debating.

You, Tammas, and me,

And Robbin, that's three,

As a grave deputation nane better could be;
And sae, on the morrow, at e'en we will wait

On Maister Macfarlane and briefly we'll state
Oor cause of complaint, and reason the maiter ;
Then syne to the Session we'll gang sometime later
And mak oor report."

And sae it was settled,
But a certain thing happened that naneo' them ettled—
The minister's maid, slee Kirsty Maclean,
Heard a' that was said frae behint a gravestane ;
And soon as the minister's duties were din,
She told him the story that same efternune :

And then this slee maid,
With the minister's aid,
A droll and a canty bit plan she laid.

III.

THE MINISTER'S DEFENCE.

Next nicht cam the grave deputation, the three,
A' walking as elders should walk, cannilie,
And knocked at the manse door three solemn knocks,
But no wi' a rat-tat, like licht-minded folks,
The maid let them in, fu' grave and demure.
"Is the minister in?" quo' she, "I'm no sure,
But gin ye come in for a wee I will speir."
Then enter the minister—"Whom have we here?
Why, friends, come away, you are welcome!" he cries.
"Come away, I declare, 'tis a pleasant surprise,
A pleasure unlooked for—take chairs, friends, take
chairs"—
"We'd speak just a meenit," auld Tammas declares,
"Then better this night, sir, I would not desire
Than a talk with a friend; so come in by the fire."
Syne, scraping their feet, they come into the room,

Their lang faces wearing an ominous gloom ;
And stiff and solemn, and grave in air,
Each elder sits down on a stuff-bottomed chair.

(And aye since that night,

Kirsty says wi' delight,

That minister folk, for a' their black cassocks,
Can fib just as weel e'en as puir servant lassocks.)

"Now, gentlemen, tell me," the minister said,
"The lucky and fortunate cause which has led
To this very opportune visit ; but, hold,
As the night's somewhat chilly, to keep out the cold,
A wee drop Glenlivet I think we may try ;
At anyrate, friends, it is ill talking dry."
The three lookit solemnly, ane at the ither,
But shortly consented wi' gey little swither ;
And sae wi' his key he unlockit his press,
And brought oot a sonsy big bottle and gless.

Syne Kirsty, sae slee,

Wi' a glint in her ee,

Laid oot the materials sae daintilie,
And brought the het water and bonnie big tumblers—
She made three especially hot for the grumblers—

And the water, eh sirs ! ne'er cam oot o' a spring,
Nor burnie, nor loch, nor yet ony such thing ;
But cam, gin the truth I may whispering tell,
Frae the wee, wicked, wimpling worm itsel'.

Guid toddy to brew,

As the minister knew,

Is an airt only known to the chosen and few—
Sae brewed it himsel', wi' his cunning right hand,
And aye as he brewed he grew earnest and bland ;
E'en spoke a bit homily, as gey weel he kent,
Hoo a' things material so wisely are blent ;
The weak and the strong, the sweet and the sour,
The spirit of gladness, the water so dour ;
In ae perfect blend of sweet smelling savour,
To souls that can pree it a Heaven-sent favour ;
E'en like the generous toddy before him,
Syne laddled each elder a steaming-het jorum.

The three lift their glasses and gravely they pree,
But quick lay them down wi' a tear in ilk ee !
Wi' a catch i' the wind-pipe, a gasp and a choke,
And when he got breath it was Tammass that spoke—
“ The Guid save us, sir, but your whisky is strong !

Noo whaur dae ye buy it, gin the question's no
wrong?"

Quo' the minister—"Such spirits you'll no find ilk
gate,

'Twas sent as a present from old aunty Kate,
For cordial in sickness, and she herself owned
That many a year it had lain in the bond,
And held by herself forty years on last Lammas"—
"Like the children o' Israel," quo' auld elder Tammis,
"Eh me, think o' that!" then he took a lang sip
That emptied his glass, and he smacked his lang lip.

"Now, friends, take another;" another was taen,
And even another, if I'm no mista'en;
And to help on the matter,
Wi' some mair het water,
The minister ca'd aye on Kirsty Maclean.

Then een that cam dull soon glimmered fu' bricht,
And ilka lang face grew rosey wi' licht;
E'en like some dour hillside lit up wi' the sun,
And the minister knew that his game was won.

"And now, friends," said he, "as we've tended the
body,

I've something far better than mere whisky toddy ;

"A something," said he,

"I should like you to see,

A creature of music and melodie.

Excuse me one minute, I'll bring it downstairs."

And there, sure enough, while each o' them glares,

A wonderfu' object he brings in before them,

The sight of which sends some queer glamory o'er
them—

His big violoncello, so polished and broon,

And ere they had time to rise or look roun',

He drew his wee bow ower the strings wi' a whirl,

In musical cadence that garred their nerves dirl.

First he played *Stroudwater*, calm and low,

Then *Soldau*, *St. Ann's*, syne, sae sweet and slow,

Devises—*Kilmarnock*, and *Martyrdom*, too,

And a' the auld tunes that oor forefathers knew.

And aye, as he played, each sippit his toddy,

Until a' the three seemed clean oot o' the body.

He played the *Old Hundred* in sonorous strains,

And auld elder Robbin his tumbler drains ;
And syne ilk auld fellow
Grows couthy and mellow,
Wi' the sweet music played on that violoncello.

* * * * *

IV.

BEFORE THE SESSION.

The Westbridgend Session in conclave hath met :
Each member sits there, 'tis the night that was set
To deal wi' their minister, his fiddle as weel ;
And ilk individual there present can feel
That this is a serious matter indeed.
Then elder Munroe, taking care and great heed,

That a' was in order, and timely and meet,
Deliberate and gravely rose up to his feet.
He said that he now would mak his report,
And Robbin and Tammass was there to support
Each word he would say—

“ Oh, freens, ye weel ken
What Israel's great king said—the wisest o' men—
The talebearer's words are as dangerous dairts,
And their wounds sink down into the innermost pairts,
And sae, we oorselfs, hae been muckle to blame
In meddling thus wi' oor minister's name ;
And I ken for mysel' there ne'er was a tale,
For want o' a leg e'er let hirple or fail.
We've a' been wrang in this matter, e'en sae,
Like shepherdless sheep we've a' gane astray.

But noo i' the licht,

On this very nicht,

I'm here to bear witness for truth and richt,
And yet, my freens, 'tis the truth that I say,
Oor minister e'en on the fiddle *does* play !
But what kind o' a fiddle ? aye, there's the bit,
And there's whaur, like great muckle fules, we've
been hit.

What kind o' a fiddle ? a fiddle o' sense,
A fiddle that plays baith wi' time and mense ;
It's no a wee sinfu', skirling fiddle,
Tae gar a man's elbuck gang jink and diddle,
BUT A GREAT BIG, GAUCY, GODLY FIDDLE !"

That nicht, when a' on the road gaun hame,
Auld elder Tammas, whose theme was the same,
Tried in re-telling the wonderfu' story,
To hang roun' the fiddle e'en greater glory.
" And gin ony man i' the Session," quo' he,
Wad like for himsel' that great fiddle to see,
I'm sure ye hae only the word to say,
And its I will gang wi' ye, be't nicht or day ;"
For the heart and soul o' the decent auld body
Was moved when he thocht on the minister's toddy.

" Oh, I never," quo' he,

" Heard sic melodie !"

And a far awa' look syne cam into his ee.

The Skinning of the Ould Cow.

AN IRISH LEGEND OF THE APRIL BORROWING
DAYS.

ON a slope of Slievegallon, near the town of
Killmoughery,
There grazed an ould cow on the farm of Jim
Loughery ;
And though an ould stripper, there ne'er was a better,
With limbs like a greyhound, and eyes like a setter.
And all through the winter, 'mid frost, sleet, or snow,
In byre, or in field, or where'er she might go,
She'd wag her ould tail,
Strong as blackthorn flail,
In the deepest of scorn as the north wind would blow.
So to pull down her pride
All the months went aside,

And into conspiracy straightway did go,
And swore a deep oath they would lay that cow low !
“ I’ll choke her with fog,” says scowling November ;
“ I’ll bury her alive,” says black-browed December ;
Says January and February, “ Lave her to us,
We’ll finish her nicely without any fuss.”

When up steps bould March,
With a smile grim and arch,
And says, “ I’m the boy that will soon make her
whisht, for

I swear, by my honour,
Such a storm I’ll bring on her,
I’ll send her to pot with a taring nor’ easter.”

So at once he began, and he fumed, and he blustered,
And his nipping winds blowed,
And he sleeted and snowed.

Till all the wide world with red noses were clustered.
Ears, fingers, and toes, all so loudly bewail,
All save that ould cow with the scornful tail,
Which she wags in derision, and quietly grazes,
As much as to say,
In a delicate way,

24 *The Skinning of the Ould Cow.*

"Sure March and his bluster may both go to blazes!"
Oh, 'twas then he grew mad, for his last day had come, "
And swore like a trooper, and thought that the sum
Of all he had done was of no use whatever ;
 And for aught that he knew
 That he ever could do,
That scornful ould cow, sure, might graze on for ever.

When up came Spring's daughter, young April so
fair,

With a bunch of sweet primroses pinned in her hair,
And stood in their midst, all sunshine and smiling,
And asked them the reason of all this reviling?

 When March, the ould baste,
 Demanded in haste
The loan, from fair April, of three days at laste ;
 And if that she would
 Just then be so good,

He swore by the piper that played before Moses,
Though all the whole world were deprived of their
noses,

He'd take that ould cow—the hard-hearted sinner,
And with these three days he would kill her and skin
her.

So April consented, and March caused once more
O'er dreary Slievegallon his bleak winds to roar ;
And faith, it is said, that there never had been
In the province of Ulster the like of it seen.
Till the back of that poor ould unfortunate cow,
With cowl'd and with hardship was bent like a bow.
When at last—ah ! how sad is my story to tell !
Down low in a furrrough exhausted she fell.

Then March in joy shouted,
And the poor cow he flouted,
And said that to skin her he soon was intending ;
When, just as he spoke,
With a gasp and a choke,
His three borrowed days they just came to an ending.

But the very best part of the story comes now,
For out of the furrrough leaps up the ould cow,
The artful ould stripper, she'd only been schaming,
And March he stared at her, and thought he'd been
draming ;
And "Hurroo !" says the cow, as her tail up she set,
"By my faith, March, my boy, sure I'm not skinned
yet !"
So March on the spot, sir, went stark, staring mad,

26 *The Skinning of the Ould Cow.*

And from that day to this he always takes bad
About this time of year, and borrows three days
From purty young April, who humours his ways ;
And in his mad rage he has always to fall on
 The ghost of a cow,
 That no one sees now,
For she's dead long ago on the slopes of Slievegallon.

The Lament of Dougal Macgregor.



SO Dougal lay dead, och aree !
 His chanter now silenced for effer ;
 The last Red Macgregor wass he,
 A ferry goot job whateffer.
 Oh, 'tis he that wass aye the wild lad,
 With hough like a bullock or filly,
 His life had its goot and its bad,
 Wass piper, and henchman, and ghillie.
 But now he lay dead och aree !
 No more he would tread on the heather ;
 And clansmen, from Luss to Lochee,
 All mourned for Dougal together.

His name it wass known farr and wide,
 The last blood of Rob Roy Macgregor ;

28 *The Lament of Dougal Macgregor.*

And Rob, in the best of his pride,
 I'm sure wasn't wilder or bigger.
He neffer was anything long,
 But just aye a wild hielan rover ;
Could play on the pipes, sing a song,
 Wass poacher, and poatman, and drover.
And famed too, ass effery wan knows,
 From Drymen to lonely Glen Falloch,
And known to the Duke of Montrose,
 And Constable Campbell in Balloch.
But now he lay dead, och aree !
 Stretched out by old Flora Macluskie ;
His like Drymen Fair ne'er will see
 For dancing, and drinking the whusky,!

The last night that Dougal wass here,
 He sent for his friends altogether,
And kindly they gathered them near,
 O'er mountain, and moorland, and heather.
There wass Norman, and Donald—och hone !—
 And two cousin's sons from Dumbarton,
And Hamish, and Rob, and young Shon,
 And others—true sons of the tartan.

The Lament of Dougal Macgregor. 29

So, when they were all sitting still,
Then Dougal asked old Duncan Dewar,
With pen just to write out his will,
To make all things certain and shuar.

“ My poat I will leave to young Shon,
My shot-gun to wee Archie Biggar,
My tackle to Allison’s son,
And my pipes to young Hamish Macgregor.

“ And the Duke of Montrose’s man, Shon—
No better e’er stood in shoe leather—
Has twenty goot pounds of my own,
All the money I effer could gather.
And this he will take, and employ,
To bury me, ponnie and pleasant ;
For I’m the last blood of Rob Roy,
I’m not a poor Sassenach peasant !

“ And down on Inch Calliach’s green breast
Just bury me, where the winds free soch ;
Aye, there I will lay me and rest
Till Gabriel blows the last pibroch.

30 *The Lament of Dougal Macgregor.*

“ Let twelve hielan lads be picked out,
 Each wan in his bonnet and feather,
To carry me steady and stout,
 By fours, taking turns together.

“ And, friends, don’t old Dougal afront,
 By making believe to deplore me ;
But Hamish will walk in the front,
 Playing my own pipes before me.
And aye on the road, as you go,
 Still halt when you see hielan heather,
And Hamish a pibroch will plow,
 To bring the Macgregors together.
Then five or six ferry goot men,
 Without any teetotal rigour,
Will hand the dram round now and then,
 And drink to the last Red Macgregor.

“ That’s all. My old pipes give me down,
 I’d feel them wanst more on my shoulder ;
I would hear the old chanter’s sweet soun’
 Before my old fingers grow colder.”
And there, just before effery eye,

The Lament of Dougal Macgregor. 31

He tuned the old pipes in their places,
Gazed fondly, and gave wan long sigh,
And stroked all their ribbons and graces.
And then, as his time was near spent,
He into the bag began plowing.
And played the Clan Alpine Lament—
’Twas just on the eve of his going—
Then stopped, and just laid back his head,
His fingers relaxing their vigour,
So passed through the mists of the dead,
The ferry last wild Red Macgregor.
And Dougal lay dead, och aree!
His chanter now silenced for effer ;
The last Red Macgregor wass he,
A ferry goot job whateffer.

Owen Kavanagh's Tree.

AN ULSTER BALLAD WITH A PROLOGUE.

THE main incidents of the following ballad are true, and the actors in it known to myself. The tree referred to was, or correctly is, a fine specimen of the Willow kind, known in Scotland as a Sauch, and in most parts of England and Ireland as a Sallow. I do not suppose it is necessary to explain to the intelligent reader the natural causes leading to the wonderful resurrection of the old tree. Such an explanation would only injure the interest of my story.

Neither do I require to say that I attach any political significance to my sketch. I was merely of the opinion that the matter herein narrated would, to some extent, serve to delineate the feelings and ideas of some of our Ulster neighbours at that critical time. As for the great question involved—Home Rule—I have no doubt at all, but in these days of political progress that question, like many another quite as great that has gone before, will eventually find a solution to the interests of all concerned. And the phase we are passing through at the present time is the usual and necessary preliminary we must *allow* to the Montagues and Capulets of the State, who require to go through a little of the ordinary thumb-biting before the final settlement.

THE PROLOGUE.

THE times they were bad, and the corn was dear,
And many's the man with the hot bitter tear
Was forced from his home to the far away West,
And brave Owen Kavanagh along with the rest.
Owen Kavanagh, whose people had lived on the land
Since the days of O'Neal of the blood red hand ;
Yet Owen and his wife, and his children four,
With weeping came out through the dear old door,
And down the green loaning, so sad and slow—
But I'm speaking of times forty years ago ;
And thanks to kind Heaven, as true stories tell,
There never comes sorrow but joy comes as well.

Owen's neighbour, Tom Wilson, had a son newly
married ;
And Tom, who ne'er yet on a good bargain tarried,
Bought the place for his son, for none better could
tell,
Of its thirty good acres, its deep spring well,

And warm old house with bogland galore,
Its great timber planted in good days of yore.
And, said Tom—"Son, George, its your fortune I've
made"—
George being bred to the carpenter trade.

The day Owen left he took George by the hand,
And wished him good luck of the house and the land ;
For Owen was kindly and honest, and more,
He knew his misfortunes lay not at the door
Of his neighbour—so took him aside,
And showed him a tree in its green stately pride,
Whose great giant branches stretched out far and
wide.

"This tree," quoth poor Owen, "was planted in times
When the Kavanaghs were greater, and certain old
rhymes

My grandmother taught me I'll tell now to you,
For who knows how many old sayings come true.
'Tis this—' *When this green tree lies stricken and low
The red blood of Erin in rivers shall flow !*
So runs the rhyme ; then, George, never place
Your axe at its root—for see with what grace

It stretches its branches high over the gable ;
Aye, and makes a green arch for the very ould stable.
On thee, sure, I'll dream in that far away land—
So boy fare-ye-well—there, give me your hand.

So Owen went out and George Wilson went in—
Tears of departure—a house warming din ;
The old name forgot, aye, and even the old place,
Soon changed and made new, by a new name and
 race,
That, warm with young life, cared nought for 'old
 glory—
Thus endeth the prologue, and now for my story.

THE STORY.

THE NIGHT OF THE GREAT WIND.

'Tis the year of political trouble and tricks—
The year Eighteen hundred and Eighty-six—
A day in the merry, green month of June,

The time wearing into the afternoon ;
The scene, a meadow of new-mown hay,
And for my *dramatis personæ*—
George Wilson, his son, and his boy, Ned M'Keown ;
And his two youngest daughters, both women grown ;
And three neighbour men who, in passing that way,
Stepped in off the road through the fragrant hay.

And all stood round so eager and still,
Discussing again the great Parliament bill,
For Erin that day, from shore to shore,
Was stirred as she never was stirred before.
The South and the West with high joy were elate,
And the men of the North thought that Ulster's fate
Depended that night on Gladstone's Bill,
And prayed for its downfall with right good will.

So in George's field, and all Ireland as well,
The green swathes lay on the ground where they fell ;
And the rhythmic song of the swinging scythe,
And the haymaker's lilt, so merry and blythe,
Gave place to discussions of right and wrong,
And feelings of Party so bitter and strong—
The thing that's been Ireland's great grievance so long,

So George and his neighbours discussed it once more ;
But just as they oft had to do before,
Were forced to leave off even where they began—
“For,” said neighbour Carson, “it lies with no man,
But with many, and George we must wait
On the vote of the Common’s for Ireland’s fate.”
Magee of the lough told of hearing that day
Of Fenian ships coming over the sea ;
Of landing their forces below Inishone,
And marching through Truagh all to harrish Tyrone !

Then, quoth George, “Neighbours all, I haven’t a
fear

That much will go wrong with us Protestants here ;
The great House of Commons are men, and as men,
May blunder in councils, and if so, what then ?
We’ve God, and our faith, still standing forenenst us,
And if God be for us then who’ll be against us ?
So children, to work, we’ve had long enough rest,
And see yonder storm-cloud down in the West—
So redd up the work, and work with a will,
Let Gladstone’s great measure e’en go as it will—
In Winter the cows must have fodder their fill.”

George Wilson that night, as had still been his law,
Went round all the house with his own eyes and saw
That barn and byre, and all things were right,
The cattle well fed, and snug for the night ;
And then on the gate-rail he lent him for rest,
'Neath Kavanagh's old tree, and gazed into the west.

A strong man was George, and wore well his years,
Not given to tremours or womanly fears,
Yet to-night through his being there's something doth
 thrill,
While storm clouds gather o'er Branny-forth hill ;
He lights his clay pipe, and through the old tree
The rising winds moan like the surge of the sea—
“ Now, God save our Ulster this night,” prays he.

The girls and their mother, when milking was done,
Had gone to the house and their knitting begun ;
The youngest, and this was their nightly treat,
Sat down with a book in the corner seat,
And read with sweet voice in gentle rhymes,
Some story of other and happier climes.

Then gather the rest, brimming over each one
With the wonderful theme—even William, the son,
Told how he'd been passed on the road below
By light-headed Lanty, who said he would go
All the way to the town, and wait there all night,
And bring back the news before morning light.

(Poor Lant, he'd been one of those solgering free boys,
But lost his wits fighting the sun and the Sepoys)

The father came next, and took his own chair,
And straightway the mother began to prepare
The supper of porridge, to each their own dole,
And sweet wholesome milk a brimming filled bowl ;
And, sure, that same milk it was fragrant and pure
As odorous breezes that blow o'er the moor.

Then George, after supper, made the evening prayer,
Took down the old Bible with reverence and care ;
A Bible in type of a bye-gone day,
And bound in rough goatskin, home-tanned and grey—
A book handed down from a former sire,
And brought from his home in a Scottish shire ;

Where, leaving his acres and gathered gear,
For conscience sake came to wild Ireland here.

Then George, well accustomed, began to read,
While calm and silent the others gave heed ;
And over the words, in their smooth, even glide,
Is heard the tear of the wind outside.

The chapter is finished—they join, then, in singing
The psalm, and raised by a girl's voice ringing
Like the chime of a bell, while the others come in
In homely accord, and the storm and din,
A sounding sub-bass over sea and land,
Vibrates with the power of the Mighty Hand.

And so all to bed, and to rest and sleep,
While the great House of Commons hold councils
deep,
And the Powers of the Air scream, howl, and leap !

THE OLD SAYING.

'Tis midnight—the storm is now at its height,
And George, kept awake by the noise of the night,
Lies listening. While outside, in black robes drest,
The wind tears along from its home in the west,
As only in Ireland, with fury so frantic,
All fresh from the breast of the mighty Atlantic.

And now comes a lull, and an ominous quiet,
As if he, the storm, had paused in his riot
To gather fresh strength for a final spring ;
Then as, with a madder and mightier fling,
The wind, with a sudden and furious gust,
Came down on the house with a roaring burst.

How the old home shook in its every-rafter !
Then straight on the gust, and following quick after,
Was heard a strange screaming and rending sound,
A quick rushing noise, then a crash on the ground,
That made the house shake to its very foundation,

And woke the whole household in dread consternation !
With hastily donned garments all gathered around
Their father—"Now children," said he, and the sound
Of the calm steady voice sent a comfort and cheer
To each thrilling heart, "sure there's nothing to fear,
'Tis something has fallen, so keep cool and steady,
And if byre or stable, let each one stand ready
For lending a hand to save some poor beast.
And William, you go for a light, and make haste,
When you and myself will right speedily see
What the meaning of this night alarm may be."

So George took the bar from the outside door,
And, armed with his shotgun, goes out to explore,
Straight followed by William, his lamp in one hand,
In the other his grandfather's yeomanry brand ;
And peering through gloom, and shading their light,
They step forth with caution out into the night.

But powers above ! they're soon brought to a stand,
And stopped by green branches on every hand ;
Green branches above them, green branches below,
There's nought but green branches wherever they go !

Both George and his son stood still in amaze,
Perplexed, and quite speechless, in wonder they gaze
In each other's faces, like men in a dream,
And faith those green bushes some nightmare would
seem.

"Preserve us!" said George, "now what's this at all?"
When lo! the bright moon from behind the black wall
Of the night, shone out with her gentle beams,
And lit up the scene 'neath her silvery gleams.
Then George, looking round, gave a quick sudden cry,
He saw a great gap 'gainst the moonlit sky—
A gap in the trees where no gap should be—
"Now heaven preserve us this night," quoth he,
"The storm hath blown down Owen Kavanagh's
Tree!"

His cry it was heard inside the old dwelling,
And out they all rushed, and to them George telling
The fall of the tree, they then pushed their way
Out through the branches, to see how it lay.

The great old tree stretched along all the length
Of house and outbuildings, a giant whose strength
And pride now lay lowly and prone on the ground,

While George and his people stood clustered around.
A willow it was of great girth and height,
With wide spreading roots of such wondrous might,
That falling, those roots held so hard of their grip,
The earth was all torn with rent and rip
For half an acre, and more, all around,
Upheaving the field into many a mound.

And so they stand gazing—and into each mind
There enter the words, distinct and defined,
As if spoken aloud in that lonely night-time,
And all think with fear on the ominous rhyme :—
*“ When this green tree it lies stricken and low
The red blood of Erin in rivers shall flow ! ”*
And hark ! even now, on the road below
They hear a quick tramp, and can see a bright glow
As of fire, and then, 'neath a flickering glare,
A figure comes bearing a torch in the air ;
This figure comes running with might and main,
Along the high road, then up the old lane
That leads to the house, and as it comes near
Cries out—“ Ho ! George Wilson ! I say do ye hear ?
Up billhooks and scythes man, to arms, to arms ! ”
And the shouting voice adds to the night's alarms.

But George cries, "No fear now, it's only poor Lanty,
See, yonder he comes, and his wits seem but scanty."

Next minute mad Lanty came rushing and stood
Amongst them, and seemed in his wildest mood ;
Was stripped to the belt, his poor eyes rolled about
From face to face—he again raised the shout—
"Up billhooks and scythes ! to arms, to arms !
Up boys, and fight for your lives and your farms !
The *Bill* is thrown out, but all through the land
The Fenians are rising, and under command
Of great Billy Gladstone, the hoary ould traitor—
And listen, George Wilson, to news ten times greater,
To-night there's two ship loads in Bantry Bay
Of blackhearted Sepoys athirst for the fray !
I tell ye George Wilson prepare, man, prepare !"
And thus with a shout, and a leap in the air,
And wave of his torch, he again took to flight,
As gaunt as a greyhound, out into the night.
So Lant and his torch, they both disappear,
And leave there behind them both wonder and fear.
Then George said—"I don't know now if there be
ought

Of truth in the news that poor Lanty has brought?
Who knows, he may only have heard some vain brag,
Or may have been hoaxed on by some country wag?
But what there may be in the words that he told us,
Just let us go into the house, and there hold us
All firm, and ready, for what the bright light
Of the day, and the truth may bring to our sight—
And God save our land from misfortune this night.”

HOW THE NEWS WAS BROUGHT TO CLONNANDERG CROSS ROADS.

Next morning below at the old cross roads,
Where daily the car went by with its loads
Of mail bags, a crowd was assembled betimes.
There George and his son was, and big Edward Grimes,
And Mister McGill, with his brother Tom's boy,
At home on a visit from far Illinois ;
And neighbours from miles, 'round, all eager and
waiting,

That morn at the cross roads, and all speculating
What fate had in store for their country, and cause,
And fortunes of Ulster. And then a long pause
As the car's time drew near.

Oh, boys, what a thrill
There passed through the crowd when high on Reid's
hill
The car came in view, and the speed it was going,
'Twas plain to all eyes it brought news worth the
knowing.
"Faith boys," cried a voice, and the voice was Bob
Hughes',
"We'll not be long now till we know all the news—
Good, bad, or indifferent."

And on the car came,
With a dash o'er the hill, by the powers fit to lame
A far better horse, aye, and break a man's neck,
And send wheels and springs into ruin and wreck—
For the road was an Irish road—steep, deep, and
rough—
And the driver a Munster man—hold Darby Duff.
Then on with a rush down into the hollow,

And over the bridge down below Innisfollagh,
Then lost to the view at Meeting-house Green ;
Appearing again, at the school-house it's seen,
From that down the road, 'neath the sycamore trees,
Then up to the cross roads, by Johnnie Kilea's,
And so, with a crack of his long whip lash,
Bold Darby drove into the crowd with a dash,
Drawing up with a mighty fine Munster crash !
Then round the old mare, with her hide in a barm,
And the car, they all clustered like bees in a swarm—
“Quick, Darby, the news, man ?” then everyone cries,
And Darby stood up in his long coat of frieze,
And with well-chosen words of briefest decision
He told them the news of the last night's division—
The defeat of bold Gladstone, how Home Rule lay
 smitten,
And how—but enough, lo, is it not written
In books of the *Chronicles*, *Standards*, and *Times*,
And known to all nations, and far away climes,
Wherever are found the brave children of Erin—
And where that is not, faith it's not worth the carin'.

So then, when the crowd at the cross roads had heard
Of how the new Bill in the Commons had fared,

They gave three great cheers, led off by Ned Grimes,
'Tis said that the like was ne'er heard in these times.
'Twas heard by old Peter Dale moulding his drills
Three miles away on the Drumnacrag hills,
And says he, "Now I'll wager my plough to a spoon
There's some news this day—'tis the change of the
moon ;
Will I give my two horses a handful of clover—
A minute will do it to take a run over?"
Then thought better of it, and took plough in hand,
And wisely went whistling away down his land.

THE MYSTERY OF THE OLD WILLOW.

Our drama comes now to the very last act,
And whate'er of wonder our story has lacked
We'll make it good now.
And it fell in this way—
George Wilson and William, his son, that same day,
When back at their home, took each axe in hand,

Consulting and wondering together and planned
The best mode of clearing away the old tree,
To render their doorway again clear and free

Said George, "These two heavy boughs we'll cut out
And so get more room to move round about."

"All right," replied William, and stripped to begin,
But George again paused, and said "faith 'twas a sin
To touch with his axe Owen Kavanagh's Tree."

But William, who'd been to America, said he—

"Tuts, father, old sayings are gas, every letter,
Made by old women, for men no whit better ;
The world has thrown all such nonsense aside.

Sure this very tree here's enough to deride

Such rusty old saws. Yes, father, that's so."

And to point what he said he just struck the first blow.

Then father and son, each plying his hatchet,
With power would take even Gladstone to match it ;
And under the swing and the ring of each axe
The old tree shivers, and groans, and cracks,
And each gentle leaf would seem to feel
With tremor, the touch of the cruel steel.

Tw'as George's branch was the first to fall,

And then William's next, along by the wall.
Stepping down from the trunk whereon they had stood
They pause to take breath, but feel warmed and in
mood

For the work—when, great powers! are they sleeping
or waking?

Or what's this strange sight sets their two hearts
a-quaking?

Owen Kavanagh's tree, lying low on the ground,
The tree that was known to the country all round,
The tree that was felled by the storm in the night,
Was now by some power coming back to new life!

The two men struck dumb—stand rubbing their
eyes,

And the old tree is slowly beginning to rise,
Slowly, and grandly, with wonderful grace,
No visible means, neither tether nor trace,
But just as a giant would rise after sleeping—
No wonder it set George's heart's blood a-creeping!

The talk and amazement, now how can I tell?
Of George and his family, and neighbours as well,
Their ideas, speculative and otherwise,

Of Owen's old saying, how every one tries
To account for it all by some gloss of their own.
To tell the fair truth, 'twas old Tom McElhone
Came as near to the truth as any one there
When he said, after giving the tree a long stare,
"Just say what you like, boys, the thing's mighty
quare!"

So it was, as you'll easily understand,
Being firm now as any old tree in the land.
The loss of two branches had proved a good clearance,
Forbye that it greatly improved its appearance;
And where its great tendrils had torn the ground,
And threw it up into chasm and mound,
Now every rough heap had sank back to its place,
And left for the eye neither mark nor trace.
Should some not believe this, then sceptical elves,
Just go to Tyrone and you'll see for yourselves.

And Lanty? Poor Lanty of mad men the maddest—
And this part of all my whole story's the saddest—
He disappeared after that wonderful night
He left George's household in such a sad plight;
But Samson Magee, a week after or more,

On going for gravel to Blackwater shore,
There found his poor body, stretched out stiff and
grim,
Below a deep scar by the old river's brim.
He'd rushed o'er the crag in his frenzied pell-mell,
In the dark of the night, and just lay where he fell ;
His poor fevered brains there had got their last
scatter,
And his life ebbed away down the gleaming Black-
water.

* * * * *

And now my good people sure my story's ended,
Sincerely I hope there is no one offended,
For I am the boy
That can always wish joy
To Ulster and Munster, and Leinster as well ;
And as for bold Connaught,
My blessings be on it,
And Peace, Love, and Plenty with all of them dwell !

A Memory of George Ewing's Studio.



A SCULPTOR'S studio, a little world
 Wherein the hand of chance hath madly hurled,
 Despite consistency, or right or wrong,
 Men, gods, and angels, all a wondrous throng,
 In grimmest humour. Here's nor time nor place,
 But everything around doth show the trace
 Of blind haphazard, and a certain grace
 Of incongruity reigns over all.
 What odd and curious things here catch the eye
 To fill the mind with fancies all awry.

See where Greek Helen, picturesque, doth stand,
 A Corn-law statesman touching her fair hand ;
 And here a Roman—there a modern King,
 And yonder smiling Summer, fair and bland ;
 While in behind Lord Clyde a modest Spring ;

And in the corner yonder, curious three,
Brave Burns, Psyche, and Dalglish, M.P.
Then high up near the ceiling, out of reach—
A sight that surely could a sermon preach—
A soldier with a broken sword is seen,
A maiden with despoiled drapery,
A clubless Hercules, a crownless Queen,
A Bacchus, too, without his grapery ;
Bold Julius Cæsar, with a broken nose,
A Dancing Faun, alas ! with broken toes—
All these condemned are by some ruling elf
And relegated to a dusty shelf.

Then, see this great rough block without a stain,
A block of marble without form and void,
That in the bosom of the earth hath lain
Since youthful Time usurped old Chaos' reign,
Yet bearing in its core, and ne'er annoyed,
Through all the changes that the world hath gone
Some spirit of this thing we look upon.
And now, the time being come, a power is sent,
The power creative some men genius call,
And he to whom that god-like gift is lent
Doth free it from its Hades of grim stone,
Doth break away its marble prison wall,

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And call upon it to stand forth alone.

And lo ! see where it comes, a living part

Of fair created marble to this world of Art.

And yonder, where the pure north light doth fall,

Unblemished by a ray of garish gleam,

A matchless Venus stands close by the wall,

As wondrous fair as e'er Pygmalion's dream ;

And from the point of vantage where we stand

We see the glamour that a master's hand

Hath given to the chilly lifeless stone—

The rounded softness and the glowing tone

Of life itself—ay, more than life doth seem—

Great Mystery of Art, stand still and dream !

And now who's this lies here in saddest guise,

With sprawling limbs that rest in stiffest rigour,

With vacant face, and grim lack lustre eyes,

And garb of modern times ?—a poor lay figure.

Where he reclines perhaps a moral lies,

His nether limbs encased in Hyam's trousers,

'Tween him and aught around exist no ties—

There's satire in it that would seem to rouse us—

But he, with weariness, and heart of lead,

With wooden fingers clasps his wooden head.

Jeems Anderson.

WI' his rod an' reel an' willow creel,
 His line an' basket flee,
 Oh, leeze me on Jeems Anderson,
 May Time ne'er dim his e'e.
 He bides at hame in green Carmyle,
 Up bye upon the Clyde,
 Of a' the Lanrick fisher folk,
 Oh, Jeems he is the pride.

He neither fishes braze nor perch,
 But aye the yellow trout;
 An' oh, but he's the wily lad,
 Kens hoo tae pull them oot.
 Whaur ither chiels get nocht ava',
 But bother, weet, an' fecht,
 Jeems Anderson taks oot a trout,
 A fish o' three pun wecht.

A man cam' ance frae Brighton way,

A wee bit weaver wight,

He fished a hale lang summer day,

An' got the feint a bite.

Jeems Anderson cam' doon at e'en,

An' garred his line play whiff,

An' just below the weaver's nose

He drew them oot aff liff.

A writer chiel frae Glaisca cam,

Wi' a ricket tae his pirn ;

He challenged Jeems tae fishin' fray,

But Jeems sune made him girn.

The writer he caught twa wee sprats,

A baggie, but, and an eel ;

But Jeems, he waup'd as weel he kent,

An' feth, sir, filled his creel.

He's had his troubles like the lave,

An' heartaches ane or twa,

But tak's his rod an' dauners oot,

An' sae forgets them a'.

He casts his line at Kenmuir wud,

Far frae the world's din ;

The bonnie Clyde beneath his feet,
The summer sky abune.

Gin e'er ye pass through green Carmyle,
Be sure an' ca' on Jeems ;
He'll tell ye a' the holes an' neuks
O' Clydesdale's siller streams.
He'll set ye doon a rousing dram,
An' fill your flask as weel ;
An' Jean, his wife, she'll pang your pouch
Wi' bannocks o' guid oatmeal.

Willie, the Miller.

OH kent ye blythe Willie, the miller, sae dusty,
 Wha bides at the fit o' green, cosy Carmyle,
 Wi' shouthers sae braid, and wi' voice loud and lusty,
 An' face that his freens saw aye decked wi' a smile?
 Oh it's I kent the miller, he was mine ane cronie,
 An' oot o' his kail-cog I've oft ta'en my will,
 An' oftener far than I'll e'er tell tae ony,
 In Lucky's at e'en I hae preed o' his gill.

I've kent in my time men o' standing and siller,
 Weel dressed in fair linen and braidcloth sae braw,
 But ne'er kent I ane wha could match wi' the miller,
 Tho' only in hamerspuns, dusty an' a'.
 His han' was aye ready tae help a puir cronie
 Wha maybe had fa'en mang the brambles an' stanes;
 An' rouchsome at times, he was gentle as ony
 Wi' auld fold, an' puir folk, wi' women an' weans.

What tho' wi' a freen' he'd a dram in the e'ening,
It ne'er stopped his laugh, nor yet dimmed his
 broon e'e;
He'd rise, or sit still, aye at pleasure's ain deeming,
Next morn tae the mill and nane sounder than he.
For Willie the miller was no'er lame nor lazy,
But Summer and Winter, whate'er might betide,
He'd strip tae the belt, lea'ing coats tae the crazy,
An' gar his wheel spin wi' the clear rinning Clyde.

Then, ho, there, guid wife, bring us ben a fou measure,
A tappet hen reaming baith sonsy an' braw,
Tae drink tae the miller while yet we hae leisure,
For when the nicht comes, faith, we a' maun awa'.
Sae here's tae ye, auld freen', guid fortune attend
 thee,

May Providence guard aye baith thee and thy mill,
An' grist still in plenty may ilk morning send thee,
And evening aye bring thee a freen' and a gill!

A Great Secret.



A GRECIAN worker, in the days of old,
Sat weary years a problem to unfold
In mathematics—working patient still
To bend unwilling numbers to his will ;
And so toiled on, nor knew that life's bright day
From golden noon sank into evening grey.
When, lo ! one morn, beneath his weary eyes,
The task is done, and in fair figured guise
Stands writ upon his tablets, fixed for aye !
And then, elate with joy, he rushed away
Forth from his cell, into the crowd without,
And there, in busy Athens, raised the shout—
“ I've found it, ho, I've found the secret out ! ”
Then paused awaiting wreaths and Fame's loud cry.
Alas—one look amused, then passed him by.
Another touched his brow with careless pity,
Another jeered—but none in all the city
Seemed one whit moved on that triumphant day,
But passed the old man by—and went their way.

Mary Magee.



IT'S Mary Magee, she has put me all wrong,
 Sweet Mary Magee, the fair theme of my song ;
 A dark Irish girl, so dapper and bright,
 And cause of great trouble to me day and night.
 For sure it's her black eyes that are most to blame—
 Although, faith, her cheek and her brow's much the
 same,
 And lips like ripe cherries would wile from his tree
 The blackbird to kiss them—this Mary Magee !

Some people may deem other girls more rare,
 But sure in my own eyes there's none half so fair ;
 Some eyes may be blacker and brighter, yet still
 There's none can pierce through me with such a sweet
 thrill.
 Old Plato, the pagan, said no soul's complete

Until with its own other half it doth meet ;
And, faith, that same theory is quite plain to me
When standing convenient to Mary Magee !

But sure I will die now, for oh it's such pain,
The toss of her head, and her black-eyed disdain ;
And so I said to her, when sure she blushed red,
"Then don't till I tell you," so kindly she said.
Then give me fair Mary, I'll ask nothing more
Of all the rich treasures that life has in store ;
For what would the whole world at all profit me,
To gain and yet loose my sweet Mary Magee.

Thans Blubach's Courtship.



NEAR Barkinville, in New York State,
 Dwells goot oldt Frau Yanheer ;
 Near Barkinville, in New York State,
 She has von daughter dear ;
 Andt there's a garten roundt their house,
 Where they sell goot lager beer.

No fraulein efer was so fair
 In all dot New York State ;
 Andt so I fell in lofe mit her—
 Ach, Gott, it was mine fate.

I went there in der afternoons,
 To sit andt drink mine beer ;
 To drink and heave der lofer's sigh,
 When dot maiden would be near ;

And mit mine glasses on mine nose,

I sighed for dwo long year.

Goot Frau Yanheer told me not to fear,

But boldly speak my mindt—

“Der man dot's afraid of a leedle maid

Gets always left behindt.

So hurry up and wed my gal,”

Would say this Frau Yanheer ;

“I'm getting oldt andt soon must go

Where oldt folks go, I fear,

And I want dot maid some goot man's help

To sell der lager beer.”

Dis goot oldt Frau she would wink her eye,

And say “Hans, don't be sleek,

For maidens they lofe the man dot's rough,

Dot squeezes andt makes 'em squeak.”

So I tried to tell mine lofe to her—

I nefer was a bragger—

Would walk up boldt as any brass,

Mit reg'lar Broadway swagger,

But when I drew near I felt dot queer

I'd—order a quart of lager.

Von day I sat mit beer andt pipe,
 'Twas near der summer's glose,
Andt I watched mine lofe andt her lager beer,
 Mit mine glasses on mine nose.

And a man sat down on der seat mit me,
 His eyes they were grey andt merry,
Andt he said he was Dan, dot Irishman,
 Dot come from der Gounty Gerry.

He asked me for mine modder,
 He spoke dot kindt andt free,
I stood him a drink of der lager beer,
 And then he shook hands mit me.

Our talk was long, andt der beer was strong,
 Andt I toldt him all mine lofe,
Andt he said, "Mit joy sure I'll help ye, my boy,
 To win yer sweet turdle dofe,
For I learned the way in oldt Ireland ;"
 Then he swore by the powers abofe.

Says he, "There's a place in sweet Gounty Gork,
 Mit a stone called der Blarney Stone ;

Andt dot stone so quare, sure I kissed it there,
So, me boy, make nefer a moan,
For I'll blarney your leedle girl for you,
Wur she queen upon the throne."

Then we put our heads togedder so,
Andt soon made up a plan,
Andt I thanked kind heafen dot sent to me
Der help of dis Irish man ;
And I took him down to der house andt said,
"Frau, dis is mine old friendt, Dan."

I took him next te der leedle maid,
Mit her lips like der ruddy cherry,
Andt I said "Dis is mine oldt, oldt friendt,
Dot comes from der Gounty Gerry."
Then back I went to der garten seat
Andt left him mit dot maid,
And smoked andt drank another quart,
Andt for dot man I prayed ;
Mit thoughts so deep I fell asleep,
For I was none afraid.

I slept der sleep of innocence—
Ne'er was so soundt a doze.

Der time passed on, andt down der west

Der sun sank in rebose.

I woke at last mit a start, andt dropped

Mine glasses off mine nose.

“Hello! mine Gerry friendt,” I cried;

“Hafe you made der thing all right?”

Der vas no answer—none was near;

Mine Gott, 'twas almost night.

“Der's sometings wrong”—right droo mine brain

Dis thought flashed mit a boom;

Then to der house I made my way,

On tiptoe, in der gloom,

Andt right before mine eyes dis vas

What met me in dot room?

In der corner sat dot Irishman,

Mit dot maiden on his knee;

Old Frau Yanheer stood by der chair,

Her broad Deutch back to me.

Andt dot Gerry man he kissed dot maid—

Der fire flash in mine eye—

Oldt Frau Yanheer she laugh andt cheer,

Andt cried, “Come, don't be shy,

For it mindts me of dear oldt Vaterlandt,
When myself vas young andt spry."

"Der teufel ! is dis your leedle game ?"

I cried mit an angry shout,
"Oh, thunder an' turf," said dot Irishman,
"By my faith, the murder's out.

Now, Hans, my boy, just say no more,
Or you'll knock me down mit shame.
I've done ye wrong ; but, then, d'ye see,
I'll own to all the blame,
Then the Frau andt the girl are both well plazed,
And, faith, it's meself's the same."

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Mine friendts, ders noddings more to tell,
My lofe it all vas o'er ;
Old Frau Yanheer came out mit me,
And stood by der garten door.

She put her handt upon mine sleeffe,

Andt spoke in voice so kindt—

“Take comfort, Hans, mit your beer andt pipe,

But next time keep in mindt—

Der man dot's afraid of a leedle maid

Gets always left behindt.”

Adjectives !



I HAVE at home a wondrous little maid,
 Just entering the academic glade
 Of School Board lore, whose years, as I opine,
 Hath not yet reached the magic number nine.
 And so this little lass the other day,
 Rushed in on me with cheery voiced hurrah,
 And cried, with smiling face and radiant brow—
 “I’m out of nouns, papa, and I am now
 In adjectives !”

“That’s right, push on,” I said, “my little one,
 For thus another upward step is won
 Of life’s steep hill, and still keep moving higher,
 For they who don’t clime on fall in the mire.
 And what’s an adjective, Oh learned maid ?”
 “A word that tells about an noun,” she said,
 And said it with a certain air of pride,

Which I, in gentle wise, thought fit to chide,
And said—"True, child, although in my school day
More formal were our words, and we would say—
An adjective doth qualify a noun,
As *wicked boy, good girl, or scarlet gown.*"
"And then," she added, after I'd defined,
"But there are others of a harder kind
Of adjectives."

"And what are they?" "Oh *a* and *an* we'll say,
And then the numeral adjectives *this, the*—"
'Now hold you there, for I am much afraid
You're going quite too fast, my little maid;
For *a* or *an* and *the*, those words all three
Go by the name of articles you see;"
And so I spoke in calm didactic tone
To prove her wrong, but this she would not own,
But stood her ground in firmest maiden way
And said, "Oh, no, papa, *a, an, and the*
Are adjectives!"

"How do you know? I'm sure you never read it."
"I know," said she, "because my teacher said it."
"No, no," said I, "you're there mistaken, quite,

And all together wrong, and I am right ;
You must recant, you're stubborn mind bend low—
Did'st ever hear, child, of Galileo,
The mighty mind of old ?—he thought 'twas right
To unsay all his words 'fore Churchmen's might ;
With this great difference 'tween the sage and you,
That your assertion's wrong, while his was true.
So there, child—I'm your father, say you're wrong,"
But no, the little maid would have her song—
"They're adjectives !"

"Oh, stiff-necked girl, now what am I to do
To prove that what your father says is true ?
I have it now—when you come home to-morrow
Your teacher's text book you'll politely borrow,
And then I'll prove your error in a way
Beyond all question." This was done—next day
She brought a dog's-eared grammar from the school,
Which I took up, quite leisurely, and cool,
And searched, then searched again, and felt a flurry,
For I perceived 'twas not the Lindley Murray
Of my school-days—and worse—my keenest look
Could find no *article* in all the book !

And next I found—oh black and humbling day,
That I was wrong—and *a*, and *an*, and *the*
Were adjectives !

Before my little maid I stood condemned ;
My proud parental head I had to bend—
And mutter words of grim apology
As fitting the occasion, and to say
That in my youth this matter was not so.
“ But then, papa, you see ”—“ there, there, child, go
And do your lessons, I am in a hurry—”
“ But then, papa, when you meet Mr. Murray
Just tell him he was wrong—and you should say,
Please, sir, you’re wrong, for *a*, and *an*, and *the*
Are adjectives ! ”

And so the world goes on, and all is change
Beneath the sun and moon, or in the range
Of human thought. And all things come and go
And have their times, like tides that ebb and flow.
Wave after wave sweeps on in rushing band,
To spend their might and break upon the strand.
What yesterday we thought the final fact,
To-day we must unsay and quick retract.

The father's vision cannot see beyond
His own horizon—here the sun hath dawned
And there will set, there's nothing more.
But sons grow up and cross the mental score,
And lo ! new circling hills surround the eye.
And then the speeding years that quickly fly,
By which our yesterday's young lives become
To-day's exclusive stiff old fogeydom.
Yet this is Progress, and its changing ways
Turn last year's creeds to this year's heresies ;
And everything but serves its time and day,
From mightiest men, to *a*, and *an*, and *the*,
Mere adjectives !

The Lilac Bower.

A BOON the mill whaur waters glide,
Amang green bushes by the Clyde,
Wi' mony a sweet and rural wile
An' boskey shade, stan's auld Carmyle.

It's there's a tavern snug and cosey,
A' growin' roun' wi' plant and posey ;
And at the back a lilac bower,
Whaur I've seen mony a merry hour.

Oh, would that I this day could bide
In green Carmyle aboon the Clyde,
It's I wad gang wi' richt guid will
Tae yon wee bower, and ca' a gill.

I'd ca' a gill wi' nicht and main,
And freen's and me wad drink again,
We'd drink and mak' the table roar,
As oft we drank and lauched before.

We'd send for Aleck, James, and Mack,
And gar the miller stop his clack ;
We'd fill the measure, were't a bine,
And hae a nicht for auld lang syne.

Oh ! Time, thou cauldrie, cheerless wight,
That tooms the stoup wi' cruel spite,
Man, bide a wee—but off he rins,
Oh ! waes me for his souple shins !

A Ballad of Bethlehem.

I. Chronicles, Chap. xi., Verses 15-19.

KING David lay within the cave concealed,
 Hard pressed all round by cruel Philistines ;
 The clouds upon his countenance revealed
 The mood of one who with his fate repines.
 His fair bright brow had lost its wonted light,
 His eyes were dull and cast upon the ground ;
 And stricken by their captain's silent plight,
 In whispering groups his comrades stood around.

 The Philistines again o'erran the land,
 It being harvest time, despoiling grain ;
 Yea, even in Bethlehem, a mighty band
 Was garrisoned, to guard, and keep the plain.
 And thus within the town, and o'er its height,
 There lay the flower of all the Gentile host ;
 To David's eyes a sad and humbling sight,
 And to his ears their shouts a cruel boast.

Then David lifted up his voice and said,

“ Now woe is me for all my royal state,
Behold am I great Israel's king and head,
And yet this day how weary is my fate.
My childhood's time was happier far, in truth,
Before I dreamt of sword, or diadem,
But tended o'er my flock, a singing youth,
Upon the sunny plains of Bethlehem.

“ Now, here am I within this noisesome cell,

No drop of water to my burning tongue,
And yet were I at yonder crystal well,
O'er which in childhood I have oftimes hung,
I'd drink my fill, o'er yonder by the gate,
Of dear old Bethlehem, my youthful home ;
But wherefore rail I thus, it is my fate
Through weary wilds a fugitive to roam.

“ Give me to drink, I am athirst,” he said,

The which a youth brought from some pool accursed,
The muddy draught gave to his king with dread,
But David drank it fain to cool his thirst.
Then looking o'er the plain from out his cell
To where the spot stood like an emerald gem,

He cried, "Oh for a drink from yonder well
That standeth by the gate of Bethlehem!"

Then bold Benaiah whispered in the ear
Of Abishai, and Eleazar, who
Soon donned their arms without a thought or fear,
And sallied forth, three comrades, strong and true,
And sped across the plains to where there lay
The mighty Philistines in armed bands,
And there before all eyes, in light of day,
They cut their way with bright and flashing brands.

Yea, smote their way through every serried rank,
Like reapers through a crimson harvest-field;
None could prevail against them, front or flank,
Each Philistine was made to die or yield.
Then panic seized the host, in fear they fled,
Such valour could not enter in their mind;
And throwing down their arms they cried in dread—
"It is their God who with them hath combined!"

And so those three went up to Bethlehem's gate
And filled a pitcher at the cool clear well,

Then, even as they came, returning straight,
They made their way back to King David's cell.
"Behold, oh King!" they cried, "a pitcher filled
At Bethlehem's well, lo, we have brought for thee,"
And gave it to the King, whose heart was thrilled,
In wonder at the courage of the three.

He took it eagerly and clasped it round,
When, lo, his eyes beheld the bloody stains
Upon each warrior's breast, from wounds unbound,
And from the cooling draught his heart refrains.
And as the pitcher from his lips he caught
And paused a moment, then he bowed his head,—
"Oh, God! I cannot drink, for is it not
The very life's blood of my friends?" he said.

Then lifted he the pitcher high o'erhead,
Before his wondering servants standing round,
The light of Heaven o'er his brow bespread,
And in his eyes a purpose deep profound.
"My God," said he, "now what am I that this
Sweet gift of water should my lips reward?
But Thine the gift, and all its praise and bliss;"
And then he poured it out before the Lord!

And so it's thus that all whom God doth choose
Have in their lives a well of living truth,
O'er which, with wondering eyes, they sing and muse,
While lasts the pastoral of golden youth.
We lie upon its brink 'neath sunlit gleam,
And from its limped waters drink our fill ;
Yea, into its clear depths we gaze and dream,
Beholding wondrous visions at our will.

But plains of Bethlehem soon pass away,
The shepherd's crook, and youth, we lay them down,
Ambition o'er our manhood takes the sway,
And gives to us its selfish sword and crown.
And then we leave behind our pure, sweet well,
Its fair ideals and its magic dreams ;
And in our wandering struggles who can tell
How fain we are to drink from muddy streams ?

The cruel Philistines we thought subdued
Sweep down upon our ripening harvest plains,
Their selfish hearts with love of spoil imbued,
And carry off our sheaves of richest grain.
The very Bethlehem of our youth they take,
And hold its heights with noisy rabble press ;

While we ourselves with abject fears do quake,
And hide in caves out in the wilderness.

Then comes our direst need, when through the land
No help, or aid, our weary eyes can see,
When, lo! there goes the bravest of our band—
Bold Genius, Faith, and Work, our Mightiest Three.
And see them sally forth in light of day
To put the Philistines to shame and flight;
Yea, bear a pitcher through the hard-won fray
Filled at the well of Bethlehem's pure light.

Yet when the water's in our hands contained,
We may not drink, altho' howe'er so sweet,
To pour it out, we feel our souls constrained,
A gift before the Lord of offering meet.
And though the water vanishes from sight,
A day may come when ended's all the strife,
'Twill spring again a well of living light—
The waters of a high and purer life.

* * * * *

Then here's to all our hardy captains bold !

May God's own power still dwell in each right hand ;
And Heaven's wrath the Philistines lay hold,

Confusion dire their councils all disband.
And 'mongst our THREE as mightiest let us crown

Brave WORK, the foremost ever in the fray,
Even as Benaiah, who so bold went down

And slew a lion on a snowy day.

Poverty Pairts Guid Company.



OH ! ance it's I had land and store,
 And guineas fair whaur noo I've nane ;
 And freens I've counted by the score,
 But noo I'm left to sit my lane.
 Oh ! ance my guests sat roun' the room,
 And wit and wine were wondrous free ;
 But woe is me the goblet's toom,
 And poverty pairts guid company..

My doublet then o' the crimson pile,
 Is noo, guid faith, but fustian bare ;
 Then ilka face wore ever a smile,
 With hail-fellow greetings beyond compare.
 But poverty, thou grim-faced loon,
 Thou'st stown my dearest freens frae me ;
 Oh ! ragged hose—oh ! clouted shoon—
 Oh ! poverty pairts guid company !

The measure weel may empty sit
 Upon the board when it should be fou ;
The crack may tak' a silent fit,
 And smiles a' vanish frae ilka broo.
Syne fare-ye-weel, for I maun gang,
 My face nae mair this gate ye'll see,
Since empty-pouch is a' my sang,
 And poverty pairts guid company.

Hey, Landlord ! bring me a measure ben,
 For courtesy thou wilt I ween,
My goblet I will fill again,
 And drink to days that I hae seen.
I'll fill a bumper ere I trudge,
 I'll toast the freens ance leal tae me,
For I will bear them never a grudge—
 Oh ! poverty pairts guid company !

When the Ship comes Home!

—:—

OUR ship's upon the ocean,
 Making sail for you and me ;
 Her holds are filled with treasures,
 She's brought from o'er the sea.
 She has doubled wild Cape Horn,
 And crossed the Spanish main—
 'Tis long since she has left us
 But she'll soon be home again.

Chorus—

Then wait, boys, wait, till our ship comes home
 again ;
 Yes wait, boys, wait, while she sails the stormy
 main ;
 Oh, 'twill be a merry day
 When she anchors in the bay
 And the captain cries "belay !"
 When the ship comes home.

Her sails are white as snow flakes,
Her ropes are taut and trim ;
Her yards are square and shapely,
And tight in every limb.
The crew are on the foc'sle,
The captain walks abaft,
And with her mainsail flowing
She's a tidy little craft.

She's stored with silks from China,
And pearls from Peru ;
With gold from California,
And gems from Timbuctoo ;
With earrings for our Maggie,
A monkey for our Bill—
Oh, if we had her bow rope
We'd haul it with a will.

With every stitch of canvas
All set before the breeze,
Right merrily she's sailing
Across the summer seas—
Across the summer seas, boys,
And steering for the bay,

And soon we'll hear them cheering,
When the captain cries "belay!"

Chorus—

Then wait, boys, wait, till our ship comes home
again ;
Yes wait, boys, wait, while she sails the stormy
main ;
Oh, 'twill be a merry day
When she anchors in the bay
And the captain cries "belay!"
When the ship comes home.

[The foregoing was written as a song for my own children, and contains a faint echo of a beautiful pantomime song of the old Dunlop Street days, when pantomimes *were* pantomimes. Most of my contemporaries will remember the ditty—"I saw a ship a-sailing"—and the wonderfully sweet melody written for it by Mr. Lambeth].

An Epistle to a Friend.

(AFTER BURNS.)



Kind friend your letter late to hand,
 Writ in braid words o' Scotia's land,
 Gif rhymes eneugh I can command
 To screed it aff,
 Ane a' the same to thee I'll send,
 Be't corn or caff.

Your kind words a' I read them ower,
 O' flattery faith ye hae the power,
 But man this warl's dull and dour,
 And lads like you
 Puir rhymsters meets na ilka hour,
 They're unco few.

I think I scan your meaning weel—
Ye fear that I, puir thowless chiel,
Am rinning headlang to the de'il,
 In fair despite,
Because the hill I canna spiel
 O' fortune bright.

Auld friend I'm proud to say you're wrang—
Though truth to tell I whiles think lang
At Fortune's wheel to hae a bang—
 A merry spin,
Syne slip awa' content and gang
 Ayont the mune.

But since that fate it manna be
My present life content I'll dree,
And gang my gate, baith licht and free,
 And count great gain
In wife, in bairns, and friends like thee,
 And ne'er complain.

For what is wealth, and gear, and gain?
The wise king said in words fu' plain—
It adds but to man's care and pain,
 And e'en tak's wing,

Then flees awa' wi' micht and main,
Baith rap and ring.

And after a' what guid's in fame?
A puff o' reek, a flickering flame
To daze oor een, and then—oh shame!
Turn clean about
Some ither airt, grow cauld and tame,
And syne gang oot.

Puir fule, his dool is sad and sair
Wha preens his faith, his life, and mair,
On Wealth, or Fame's loud trumpet blare,
And sic like bubbles;
His days will pass awa' in care
And toil and troubles!

A leal heart's mair than gowd and gear,
Content, than thousands ten a year;
Gie me but these and nocht I'll fear
That stands before me;
And ither loons their hearts may wear
For wealth and glory.

February.

NOO, February, you're in the gate,
 February! February!
 Tho' short in days, sae big wi' fate,
 Snawing, thawing February!
 Oor forbears, wondering at your skill,
 Read a' your omens, guid and ill,
 That ruled the year frae June to Yule,
 Blawing, crawling February!

Bauld February fills his pack,
 February! February!
 First wi' white, an' syne wi' black,
 Hurly, burly February!
 An' then, guid faith, wi' barley strae,
 But's never o' ae mind a day—
 Noo blinks o' sun, then clouds o' grey,
 Changing, ranging February!

E'en see him noo wi' golden blink,
 February! February!

That gars ye on green hedges think,

Smiling, guiling February !

When, lo, frae icy teeth, a snarl,

Noo driving rain, then snaw a harl,

Losh man, but ye're an unco carl,

Skirling, birling February !

Oh, February, gin ye be fair,

February ! February !

The hauf o' winter's to come, an' mair,

Oh, wae's me on ye, February !

Then, pity tak on all folks' banes,

An' oh, deal saft wi' puir folks' weans,

Just work your will whaur plenty reigns,

Thawing, clawing February !

But February, gin ye be foul,

February ! February !

The hauf o' winter's gane at Yule,

Then leeze me on ye, February !

Sae, hasten summer, owre the braes,

We'll aiblins gi'e ye a word o' praise.

Quick man, an' gang your changing ways,

Ranting, roaring February !

The Cronies.

O H! ance 'twas my fortune to bide in a toon
 Whaur we were a' cronies thegither ;
 For every man there was leal-hearted and soun',
 An' ilk was to each a true brither.
 Oor lives were content wi' a dram an' a sang,
 While sober 'folk bade at hame haverin',
 An' we sang, while the worl' gaed jogging' alang,
 Ower a gill in blythe Jeannock's wee tavern.
 An' oh we were happy thegither !
 For the ane was as bad as the ither ;
 An' tak' us a' thro', we a' were ae oo,
 An' at heart leal and true as a brither.

There was Jamie, an' Johnnie, an' Will o' the Mill,
 An' Aleck as merry as summer ;
 Wee Sandie the saddler, unbending o' will,
 An' big, muckle Sandie, the drummer.

Frae the Braidroad Well to the fit o' the loan,
Great Bacchus ! but we were a frisky ;
We tried aye to lauch, an' never tae groan,
An' aye put oor trust in guid whisky.
For oh we were happy thegither,
First ae gill, an' then cam' anither ;
An' ilka man there aye took aff his share,
Drinking honest an' fair a' thegither.

Gin oor hearts were ocht heavy we ca'd in a gill,
An' the same were we joyfu' an' merry ;
An' every occasion of joy or of ill,
We drank while guid drink we could carry.
A' oor griefs we could kill wi' the verse o' a sang,
For the whisky was potent an' subtle,
An' oor days flew alang wi' the clink an' the clang
An' the speed o' an aul' weaver's shuttle.
For oh we were happy thegither,
Wi' a dram frae the tane tae the tither ;
We'll drink ane the nicht tae the bonnie mune
licht,
An' to mornin' bricht we'll drink anither.

New-Year's Day.



ALL hail to thee, fair Hope, on this thy day !
 We kiss thy brow and greet thy smiling eyes ;
 Those eyes that look not back, but ever gay
 Look upward, leading us in cheery guise.

The past lies all behind, its failures dead ;
 The future's thine, sweet Hope, and ours still ;
 It's possibilities lie yet ahead—
 Oh, for the strength to bend them to our will.

Then open thy new volume with its rare
 Three hundred pages, yea, and sixty-five ;
 Those pages all unwrit, still clean and fair ;
 And who can tell, but if our days may thrive,
 Of what great matter we may write therein,
 Or what of name and fame we yet may win ?

A Winter's Sang.



OH ! wintry winds and cloudy skies,
Come tell me where my true love lies ?

He left me when the green wuds rang
Wi' summer hope, and mavis' sang,
To sail the stormy seas alang.

Oh ! pairting day sae dreary !

But lads are fain

To cross the main,

An' lasses bide at hame an' weary.

Oh ! autumn leaves that thro' the wuds
Flew quick wi' life, in rustling cluds,
Why lie ye noo in silent waves
In rows alang like lonesome graves ?
While o'er tree taps the nor' wind raves,

An' thochts come sad an' eerie ;

That lads are fain

To cross the main,

While lasses bide at hame to weary.

My minnie says that men will range
The wide world o'er for love of change,
Forgetting aching hearts at hame,
And aye, quo' she, were men the same—
Gin such be sooth then sairs the blame,
For oh my heart is dreary,
That lads are fain
To cross the main,
An' lasses bide at hame an' weary.

Thou bonnie spring, oh, come again,
Wi' posies sweet to ease my pain ;
Oh, mavis tune thy melody,
An' sing my true love back to me,
Syne sweet in tune alang wi' thee,
My heart will croon fu' cheery—
O' lads sae fain
That cross the main,
An' maids wha bide at hame an' weary.

The Primroses.

—:—

I.

WITHIN a dell, one sunny April day,
 I stood, and gazed upon a group
 Of sweet primroses, fresh, and fair, and gay,
 That 'mongst the green moss gleamed in bright array—
 On Flora's sylvan robe a golden loop.
 Then fondly bending o'er them, did I stoop,
 And at their side upraised an old grey stone,
 To shield them from the nipping east wind's moan ;
 Then parted from them. I returned again,
 My primroses to greet another day,
 When ah, I found—alas, the bitter pain !
 That all but withered leaves had passed away.
 Oh ! sinful world, cried I, now, tell me why
 Earth's brightest flowers so soon from thee doth fly ?

II.

I raised mine eyes, and lo ! from every nook
And cranny round about, and mossy bed,
Some gleaming floweret raised its beauteous head ;
The fox-glove, drooping o'er the singing brook,
There seem'd to watch its shadow in the silv'ry
stream ;
Upon the hawthorn's leafy breast did gleam,
The sweetly scented blossom, richly rare,
And at its root peeped out the violet fair.
Then did my sinful words more sinful seem,
And burying in my hands my guilty head,
Methought upon an angry cloud did gleam,
These fiery words my humbled spirit read :
Say, where now is thy cause, oh, erring man,
For finding fault with Heaven's well-ordered
plan !

Lines

To R—B—T M—F—L—N, SCRIVENER.

(Written on his setting out upon a visit to Australasia).



DUMBARTON'S heart wi' grief may rend,
 Frae Kirktonhill to wee Toon End,
 Since R—b M—f—l—n doth intend
 To loa' us a';
 And through strange lands his footsteps bend,
 Sae far awa'.

They say he's gaun to sail the seas,
 Richt roun' to the Antipodes,
 Whaur upside doon grow muckle trees—
 The thocht's quite reeling—
 Whaur folk, as weel, just walk like flees
 Alang the ceiling.

He's gaun awa' to hae a splore,
Of rest and health to gain a store—
And may he get it in galore—

But, oh, losh me !

His absence we may a' deplore,
Sair missed he'll be.

For though we hae within oor toon
Baith Whyte, and Black, and Green, and Broon,
And mony a wise and pawky loon,

And canny carlin,

Still we hae jist, search up or doon,

Ae R—b M—f—l—n.

Guid keep him, then, baith safe and weel,
Till he comes back fu' blythe and leal ;
May nae mishap, or muckle deil,

Be't black or white,

Be cause o' ill, or mak' him feel

Ae moment's spite.

And if e'er in foreign toons,
He fa's across foul, knavish loons,

May he ne'er want that boon o' boons,
A guid Scotch hazel ;
Oh send him po'er to crack their croons,
And gar them dazel.

And should he ever come amang
Fierce natives armed wi' boomerang,
Jist let him sing a Gaelic sang,
And tear the tartan,
Syne gie them a pree o' something strang,
Brocht frae Dumbarton.

Kind Heaven, then, haud him in Thine hand,
And care him weel on sea and land ;
Let favouring winds at Thy command
Keep aye the same,
Tae blaw him gently to yon strand,
And blaw him hame.

The O'Harman's Gate.

CORNELIUS, and Bernard, and Phelim, were
three

“Poor scholars,” and poor, faith, as poor could be,
As ever yet trudged o'er mountain or mireland.
For the pure love of God, and the learning of Ireland ;
With big wooden spoons, that the people might see
They were only poor students of low degree.

And wherever they went,
On their mission intent,
In hall or in hut they were always made free.

But one bitter evening, so footsore and weary,
With toiling o'er hills, and through bogs long and
dreary,
By some queer turn or whim of fate,
They were brought to the mighty O'Harman's gate,—
The lordly O'Harman, the owner of all

The hills and green valleys from Slane to Lough
Gall,—

The man who in wealth and pride of soul
Had o'er his gate written these words on a scroll—

“THERE'S NOTHING ALL THIS WIDE WORLD THROUGH
THAT MEN AND MONEY CANNOT DO ”

For O'Harman was mighty, and strong, and great,
Arrogant and proud as the words o'er his gate,
With houses and lands, and golden store,
But one little grievance that pained him sore.
He was broad in the back and stalwart of limb,
But graces of manhood what were they to him?

For his nose had no trace
Of beauty or grace,
But meandered at will o'er the half of his face!
And nothing about it to charm the eye
But curves the wrong way, and lines all awry.

And here the three students so meekly did crave
A night's bed and board from the porter so grave;
Who admitted them straight, sending word to the
hall,

Where O'Harman with kinsmen, and vassals so tall,
Were dining as only O'Harman could dine,
From haunches, and pasties, and butts of red wine,
And dainties far more
Than are known to my lore,—
And for those who preferred it, good poteen galore.

“Ho! bring them up here!” cried O'Harman, for he,
When flushed with the wine, was both merry and free,
And kindly of temper, too, some men did say,
So long as it wasn't tried much the wrong way.
“Go, bring up the varlets, and this very night
We'll test if their scholarly wit's dull or bright.”

So the three were brought in, and full humbly they
stood

Before the O'Harman, to pleasure his mood;
And said he, “Your fair wits we are going to try,—
You're students, and know more of Latin than I;
But in coming in here, did you read every word
That's writ o'er my gate?” “Yes, did we, my lord.”

“You believed what you read?”

The O'Harman then said:

To this they ne'er answered, but hung down the head

Though poor, they'd the faith and the honour of
youth,—

Hadn't learned yet the art how to gloss the fair truth.

"You answer me not," cried O'Harman with ire,

His crookèd nose gleaming with ominous fire,—

"Then show me what thing, this wide world through,

That men and that money combined cannot do?

And each one who fails, let him know this the law,

He'll go without supper to bed of bare straw.

So you, sir, begin ;"—

This to Phelim Maginn,

And faith it's poor Phelim a quandary was in.

"My lord," then said he, "sure this wide world
through

There's one thing that men and that money can't do,—

To take, say, an ode that great Horace has sung,

And change the pure Latin to vulgar tongue ;

For this, sure, would need, by your lordship's decerning,

Forbye men and money, some trifle of learning."

Said O'Harman, "You're wrong, for I've nothing to do

But give Pat the groom there a crown, perhaps two,

And send him to Dublin, where soon he'll receive

All the odes that old Horace did ever conceive ;
And all fairly printed, and ready, and strung,
Plain into the words of our own mother-tongue."

Then down fell the chin

Of Phelim Maginn,

While kinsmen and vassals applauded with din.

Then Bernard O'Dowd he took his turn next—
For luck having muttered some grace-giving text,
He said that "to money and men 'twas ne'er given
To save a lost soul without grace from high heaven."

"Then, faith, you're wrong too,

As I'll soon prove to you

By Holy Church teachings, which surely are true.
Just look at the case, now, of Terrence Magrail,—
A man who in evil was ne'er known to fail,
From the days of his youth till the night when Tim
Cannon

Scattered his brains o'er the streets of Dungannon,—
But always was foremost, no matter how many,
Of all the rapscallions from Coyle to Kilkenny.
Yet Terrence Magrail was my own foster brother,—
We fought our first fight on the knee of the mother,
And for these merry days of our youth's kindly time

I wanted to help him—and where was the crime?—
So bargained our priest for as many good masses
As would help Terry's soul through all its grim passes.

And I paid the cash down,

Ay! many a good crown,

And now Terry's safe as some saint of renown.
Thus, you see, that to men and to money 'tis given
To gain for a soul the fair favour of heaven."

'Tis O'Harman looked proud,

And the plaudits were loud ;

And "Farewell to my supper!" sighed Bernard
O'Dowd.

"So now for the last," quoth O'Harman, "who's he?"

Ay! who but Cornelius O'Shaughnessy.

His cheek it was pale, but his eye it was bright,
And gleamed with a bold and a fearless light :

And "My lord," said he,

As he bent his knee,

"I'll do what I can, being last of the three."

Then he proudly stood up, and he looked all around
On vassals, and kinsmen, and great wolf-hound

That lay by O'Harman's feet on the ground.
And as he looked round there was that in his glance
As sharp, ay, and keen as the point of a lance.

Then calmly he spoke,

While his listeners all stroke

Their beards, as they waited the end of the joke.

"Yes, mighty O'Harman, I'll show you this night

What men and what money, of all their might,

May never yet do

This wide world through :

The men and the money in all this great place

Couldn't straighten the nose on O'Harman's face !"

A rush and a shout, and an Irish yell,

And guests, and kinsmen, and vassals pell-mell—

As the torch-light gleamed on their knives so keen—

All rushed upon Corney,—when in between

Their knives and the student O'Harman he leapt,

And back from their victim the rabble he swept.

Then he stood by the side of the students three,

A tower of strength that was fair to see.

"Oh ! shame on ye poltroons !" O'Harman did cry

As looking all round with grim scorn in his eye ;

“Would ye slay the poor scholar his supper for
earning,

When, faith now, that same gave yourselves small
concerning?

And well he has earned it, e'en by our own rule,

While proving himself neither coward nor fool.

Alas! when I look on this youth, 'tis a pity

But yourselves were as brave, if not quite so witty.

But enough,—to your seats, and let's empty a can

To the health and the honour of every true man,

Who, like this bold youth,

Can stand up and speak truth,

All fearless alike of both anger and ban.”

Cornelius that night 'twas himself who supped well,

And so did his comrades—and, truth to tell,

These three holy students, a little while after,

Were singing of songs mighty brimful of laughter.

For youth and light hearts, sure, are earth's fairest
treasure,

And there's never a wrong

In singing a song,

When life itself seems but a sweet lilted measure.

The Ramblers.

—:—

[Fraternally written for the Glasgow Sylvan, and Water o' Leven Ramblers, on the occasion of a joint trip to the Peesweep Inn, near Paisley.]

THE sun is up, the day is fair,
 Oor wark is done, then, a' thegither,
 Hurrah for the road oot owre the muir !
 Hurrah for the peesweeps and the heather
 A fig for every worldling's prize,
 A fig for kings and a' their favours ;
 " I to the hills will lift mine eyes,"
 And feel a thrill beyond sic havers.

Man, are ye fond o' kittle lore ?
 Owre prented words ne'er sit and glimmer ;
 But come wi' us, and scan the store
 Spread open in the book o' simmer.

There warld-auld secrets ye will find,
The words o' life, and love, and duty,
And sangs sae sweet for heart and mind,
And pictures drawn in truth and beauty.

Then harken to the burnie's din,
That fills the glen wi' music ringing ;
And water dancing ower the linn,
In sweet accord wi' blackies singing ;
While through the trees, doon yonder glade,
The south winds sigh, like lover's story,
And listening foxgloves in the shade
Shake oot their bells in crimson glory.

Sae ilka day when hearts are sair,
We'll lift oor hazel sticks sae sturdy,
And tak' the road oot ower the muir,
And lea' behin' life's hurdy-gurdy ;
And roam the hills and glens between,
For lang Scotch miles till we be weary ;
Syne stop, and turn aboot at e'en,
And dauner hame fu' blithe and cheery.

Barney Blake's Letter.

BARNEY BLAKE one day,
Just after his tay,
And thinking full sure no time could be better,
Sat down to indite,
And that manes to write,
His ould brother Patrick a taste of a letter.

Three hours and more
Did he scribble and pore
Over his letter, though in length not a span quite,
And made the pen sputter
With honey and butter,
As only a big-hearted Irishman can write.

'Twas finished at last,
Well signed and made fast
As ever was letter in Erin's green nation ;

He then looked it over,
'Twas just to discover,
If there lay any faults in the punctuation.

He stared with a frown
At it up and down,
But divil a word of it make out could he, sure ;
Then, says he, " I wont heed it,
Our Pat he'll soon read it,
He was always a far better scholar than me, sure !"

Bombastes Pursey.

BOMBASTES Pursey wearied all our ears
 With prosey stories of his early years,
 His many struggles and his wond'rous pluck,
 His small misfortunes and his mighty luck.
 We changed the subject oft, the wine we'd praise,
 "Ha! ha!" quoth Bomby, "how I mind the days
 I drank with relish swats and ginger beer,
 And that was, let me see now, in the year—"
 "Tom, sing a song," cried one—a song was sung—
 Said Bomby, "I sang too when I was young,
The Maid of Athens—Old Bob Ridley, oh!"
 Another tried to stop the awful flow
 By asking how some stocks and shares then stood?
 "All bosh!" said Bomby, in his noisest mood,
 "When here to Glasgow first a youth I came,
 I tell you, gents, with neither wealth nor name,
 But bare five shillings in my waistcoat pocket—"

We laughed aloud—

Quoth Brown, "Come friends don't mock it,
For even stranger happened to myself.
I, too, to Glasgow came a poor young elf,
I had not e'en a penny, no, not one,
Nor shoe, nor stocking, faith, it was no fun,
Nor shirt to my young back—yet fate, so rare,
Is not uncommon—*I was born there !*"

The Monks of Saint Mungo.

[*Our Monastery was conveniently situated above a whisky shop
in Sauchiehall Street.*]

—:—

WE'RE the monks of Saint Mungo, as merry a
crew

As e'er said an *ave* or *credo*;

'Tis the truth he will tell, who says we live well

From morn till we tumble to bed, O.

For the world we let jog like a jolly old log,

Afloat down the stream of Time's river;

While we drink the red wine of the sunny old Rhine,

From sadness our hearts to deliver.

Chorus—

And we gaze at Life's brawls o'er our monastery walls,

And laugh at its folly and jangle;

VANITAS VANITATUM, we cry to the dupes,

Who skin their poor shins in the wrangle.

Brother Harry will pore o'er his Scrivener's lore,
Brother Alec will troll us a ditty ;
And at Friar John's chaff if we merrily laugh,
Where's the wisdom can say 'tis a pity ?
Give bluff Brother Andrew a goblet well filled—
For of claret he ne'er was a scorner ;
While to addle his poll o'er a musty old scroll,
Brother Peter will sit in the corner.

Now the wise Hebrew King he once said a good
thing—

He's a fool who the cure never trieth—
That the heart's merry mood like a medicine doth good,
While sadness the bones ever drieth.

Then a fig for the toils of the world and its broils—
Poor bubbles that burst every minute ;
For a cup of good wine, and a merry old song,
Are the only good things that are in it.

So we'll gaze at Life's brawls o'er our monastery walls,
And laugh at its folly and jangle ;
VANITAS VANITATUM, we'll cry to the dupes,
Who skin their poor shins in the wrangle.

Dumbarton Castle.

—:—

OH, mighty rock ! oh, pile of strength and power,
 That Time himself, 'twould seem, can not deface,
 But rather round each angle of thy tower
 Takes pride in decking still with many a grace—
 Of Summer greenery, or of russet shade
 Of Autumn, or of Winter's silvery sheen.

Since e'en old mother Earth was but a maid
 Here hast thou aye a mighty sermon been
 To tell the vanity of man's short power—
 To tell of generations thou hast seen,
 Who climbed, and scrambled o'er thee, to pursue
 Their little aims of petty good and ill ;
 And on thy breast lived their allotted hour,
 Like pigmy ants upon a summer hill !

There was a King of France.

THERE was a king of France, brave boys,
Who had ten thousand men,
And first he marched them up a hill,
Then marched them down again.
Oh, he marched them down that hill again,
With steady step and slow,
Quoth he, "Those heights, though in our rights,
We're safer down below,"
Did this jolly old king of France.

And so he always stayed at home,
And never went to Spain ;
He'd sometimes peer o'er his frontier,
And then come back again.
For he said that war was very bad,
And shot and shell were low ;
And thus he had ten thousand men
Wherever he did go—
This good old king of France.

All Europe rung one awful day
 With noisy war's alarms ;
 So this old king turned out his men,
 And placed them under arms.
 " Eyes front !" he cried, and looked quite fierce,
 " To War !" cried each dragoon ;
 " Ah, well," he said, and shook his head,
 " We'll think on't some day soon,"
 This wise old king of France.

There's a moral in my little song
 That's worth a mint of dollars,
 And holds the grit of all I've writ,
 And briefly is as follows :—
 Whenever you get up a hill,
 Don't at the top remain,
 Just right-about face, with quiet grace,
 And e'en come down again—
 Like the safe old king of France.

The Groves of Kelvin.

(*Opening of Glasgow Exhibition, 1888.*)

—:—

IT'S of the opening of our Exhibition,
 The exposition, faith, I'll write it fair ;
 The mighty time, sure, I'll sing in rhyme, sure,
 And the people fine, sure, who all were there.

Ye gentle muses, if with me combining
 Your sweet inclining to guide my quill,
 Then all the nation, in deep admiration
 Of my oration, boys, will smile their fill.

The Eighth of May, then, it was the day when,
 Like lambkins playing in the sunny beam,
 The lads and lasses, in their merry masses,
 The long day passes by sweet Kelvin's stream.

There men and women were from every nation,
 All in emulation to enjoy the day ;
 Black, white, and yellow, and the tint so mellow
 From County Wexford, by the sounding say.

And lords and ladies, in their silks and satins,
From the hour of matins till the afternoon,
Sure their airs and graces, and their purty faces,
As they kept their places, was to all a boon.

Each great official, in their robes especial,
They were a credit, sir, to any town ;
Lord Provost King, too, the civic ring, too,
And Dr. Marwick in his black silk gown.

But the poet's trade is to praise the ladies,
Myself the blade is, the same adores ;
That day my heart, faith, with pride did burn,
For at every turn there they stood in scores.

And that fair Princess, of beauty glorious,
And fame victorious where e'er she goes ;
Sweet Alexandra is the one I mention,
Beyond contention, sure, she was the rose.

And Albert Edward, he stood beside her,
In Royal pride for to see the fun,
Like king, and kaiser, and Julius Cæsar,
And a British officer rolled into one.

Of the gates thrown open, and the speeches spoken,
With sign and token, and praise and prayer—
Its full relation is not my vocation,
Just read the papers if you were not there.

Nor could I tell of that Exhibition,
Nor give a notion all it does contain ;
Gold from Peru, sir, and Timbuctoo, sir,
And silken banners from the hills of Spain.

But the architect who did it project through,
Did not neglect to make it shine ;
And sure his name it is Jimmy Sellars,
Who from his head did it all entwine.

Oh, the songs and choruses, and sights so glorious, ^{his}
A thing to dream about for many a day.
Oh, the men so frisky, and the wine and whisky,
And the gentle ladies sipping cups of tay !

And so with smiling, and no one riling
At sweet beguiling, the day went by ;
And all went home with great content then—
For money spent, then, let no one sigh.

The Stable Door.

WHEN Jock was young he owned a nag
 Whose beauty made him fain to brag ;
 And ne'er on hill or dale he'd lag
 But took the road aye spanking.
 It's he rade up and he rade doon
 To show his nag through a' the toon,
 And gar to glower ilk gaping loon
 That on his feet gaed lanking.
 For certes youth's a winsome boon,
 We tak' without a-thanking,

His minnie cried "Lad, hae a care ;
 Tak' time and dinna ride sae sair ;
 Next month brings merry Lammas fair,
 Sae hain your beast an' pocket."
 His dad he glowered and wagged his head ;
 Quo' he, "ride slow or ride wi' speed,
 I counsel that ye aye tak' heed,
 And keep your stable lockit"—
 But youth's ill-fashed wi' age's rede,
 An' wisdom's often mockit.

Oh, when Jock's nag was in her sta',
He flung the door wide to the wa'
To show her form, sae sleek and braw—

His freen's cried man ye're silly.
He lauched to see some stan' and stare ;
Some hirple bye on taes fu' sair,
"For me," quo Jock, "for ever mair
I'll ride while there's a filly ;"
An ill knave sneered, and cried, "Beware !
Some ride ower fast, my billy !"

There fell a nicht o' dool and smart,
A traitor played a traitor's part,
An' stole Jock's nag—nigh broke his heart !

Gude faith this is nae fable.
Her bonny een, her silky main,
Her winsome hide, withoot a stain—
Oh, ne'er saw he her like again
E'er staunin' in his stable ;
For ill-hained pleasure's future pain,
Sae tak' tent while you're able.

My father's flute.



O H silent flute ! how lifeless dost thou lie,
 Entombed mid many tender memories,
 And yet thou did'st possess in days gone bye
 Sweet eloquence of matchless melodies.

And so 'tis meet—since even the lips so kind,
 That once so truly did beguile from thee
 Thy tuneful soul in willing harmony,
 Are silent too ; thy soul's with his enshrined.

What though I place my fingers o'er the stops,
 And try to fill thy form with life and sound,
 All quickly from my hands the old flute drops,
 While in my breast an eerie thought is found—

E'en like the man who, by magnetic strife,
 Wiles some poor corpse back to uncanny life.

Gleniffer Linn.

THE waters go tumbling over the linn,
 And I lie on the grass 'mid the roar and the
 din ;
 And the waters flash,
 And they leap and dash,
 Then whirl away in an eddying stream,
 While dozing I lie in a motely dream.

The crags and the moorland around me lie,
 And soft o'er the broom doth the south wind sigh,
 With the bleat of the sheep,
 And cry of peesweep ;
 Whilst down in the valley, 'midst smoke and moil,
 There hums a grim beehive of human toil.

'Tis said on this spot a brother hath lain,
 With a soul that gave birth to many a strain
 That cheers us along
 Like an angel's song ;

Yet down in yon valley what did he gain
But a life of toil that was sealed with pain ?

A mystery deep is this life, I trow ;
We enter it jostling—the When ? and the How ?—

And a few short years
Of smiling and tears ;
Then a long farewell to pleasure and pain :
But the broken turf will grow green again.

See, down the smooth pool a bubble doth float,
While its rainbow-colours the eye may note ;

And gaily it gleams
In the bright sunbeams,—
When over the linn it goes 'mid the roar,
And the air-blown bubble is seen no more.

Still the waters go tumbling over the linn,
As I lie on the grass 'mid the roar and the din ;

And the waters flash,
And they leap and dash,
Then whirl away in an eddying stream,
While dozing I lie in a motely dream.

The Day-Nicht.



YOU'RE no' to think us workin'-folk
 Hae nocht in life but toil and care,
 For noo an' then a gleam o' licht
 Athwart oor lives shines bright an' fair.
 An' ane o' them's that happy day
 That comes at ilka fortnicht's end,
 When wi' oor jinglin', bright bawbees,
 Wi' gladsome heart we hamewards wend.

The guidwife, bustlin' but-an'-ben,
 Has a' the hoose sae trig an' clean;
 Wi' mony a wistfu' look she waits
 For faither an' the weans, I ween.
 An' noo they a' come flockin' in,
 Wi' mony a merry jump an' hap;
 An' crowdin' roun' the shinin' hearth,
 Throw a' their pays in mither's lap.

What tho' they hae sae oft a facht,
To stretch life's ends, an' gar them meet ;
Or noo an' then grim poverty
Comes to their door wi' clam'rous feet ;
This happy nicht it's a' forgot,
As roun' the fam'ly board they thrang,
Wi' faces bright an' gleefu' hearts,
A' merry as a laverock's sang !

It's on this nicht, tae, auld Rab Brown
Foregathers wi' auld Cobbler Tam ;
While hours slip by on secret wings,
Wi' crackin' owre a sòcial dram.
They crack o' magic "Auld Lang Syne,"
Whan they were boys—a thochtless pair ;
An' o' their merry wooin' days,
That's gane these forty years an' mair.

An' on this nicht, young Geordie Scott
Tak's winsome Nell tae see the play ;
An' owre the fair young Juliet's griefs
Her kindly heart grows unco' wae.

But Johnnie Blair—that carefu' lad—
A hale haufcroon puts in his kist ;
While visions bright, an' future plans,
Float thro' his brain like summer mist.

But there is ane amang the lave—
Kind pity, on his fate look doon !
That tries this nicht wi' whisky strong
His warldly cares an' thochts to droon.
King Solomon's advice he tak's,
Relief tae get frae a' his care ;
An' tries wi' drink to happy be,
An' mind his misery nae mair.

An' let us no' forget this nicht
The chiel that's in the strife cast doon,
Wi' battlin' hard 'gainst mighty odds,
An' stern misfortune's cauldest froon ;
But he that comes frae oot that strife,
Wi' spotless name an' honour bright,
Let's raise him high aboon the heads
O' high-born lord, or belted knight.

Kind Heaven, then send us manly strength,

An' wark, to earn an honest pay ;

An' wi' contented happy hearts

We'll trudge alang on life's highway ;

An' on't we'll aye find restin' neuks,

Beneath the shady hedgerows green,

Where God has strewn wi' stintless han

Sweet wild-flowers wi' their golden sheen.

BOB BROWN AND I:

A Glasgow Love Story.

Bob Brown and J.

PART FIRST.

BOB AND AGGIE.

BOB BROWN, he was a Glasgow man, pure
Glasgow born and bred,
For many generations, too, I've often heard it said ;
His eyes they were a bright clear blue, like a Summer
Sunday sky,
And with the marble shapes of Greece his well poised
head could vie ;
A rare bit of young manhood, smart, and clean, and
trim,
As any one could look upon, and sound in wind and
limb—
Just five feet nine, or thereby, and shapely, that was
him.

By trade he was an engineer, and famous far and
wide,

Though not three years a journeyman, through every
shop on Clyde ;

Famous as a workman, with a handy ready neck
For all the mysteries of his craft, together with no
lack

Of genius natural to the man, and always in his
reach,

The art that 'prentice cannot learn, nor clever master
teach.

Then such a favourite as he was, and loved by high
and low,

By masters, foremen, shopmates, no matter where
he'd go ;

And when at every fortnight's end, on pay-day, 'I'll
be bound,

'Twas always who would have him then amongst his
comrades round.

To every ear there surely was some glamour in his
voice,

For none could tell such stories, nor of songs had such
a choice.

Oh, in such merry company, the hours would disappear

With talk, and crack, and witty jibe, with laugh, and
ringing cheer,

While pewter tankards, silver bright, went round
with foaming beer.

And Bob could well enjoy such nights, for a social lad
was he,

And seldom grudged to spend an hour in a shopmate's
company—

But there was one in Glasgow town, one little hour
with whom

He would not give for fifty such spent in the merriest
room —

And that was bonnie Aggie Craig. And who was
she? you'll ask,

Then I will tell you, who she was, to me a pleasant
task :

No golden store, nor acres fair, nor silken gowns had
she,

Yet Aggie was a lady born, of nature's own degree,
You'd hear it in her low sweet voice, you'd see it in
her mein,

Oh, a bonnier lass than Aggie Craig it's I have never
seen—

A steam-loom weaver Aggie was, and worked across
the Green.

In memory's fondest keeping I have her picture now,
Her hair was of the warmest brown, and rippled o'er
her brow,

Her eyes were darker than her hair, with the steady
look of truth,

With heavy fringed lashes ; the luxuriance of youth
All glowed upon her cheek and brow, with warm
mellow tint,

Her figure was of medium height, and nature made
no stint,

But gave her of the richest all the graces one could
name,

In lines so fair and stately ; and so beauteous were
the same

By reason of the curves wherein they ended or began,
The gracious curves of womanhood. There never was
a man

But seeing her would stand and look with pleasure in
his eye ;

And many a lady in the land with envious heart
would sigh,

When Aggie, trig and bonnie, to her work went passing by.

Yet all this outside beauty of graces rich and rare,
Was but the external index of the heart so true and
fair ;

The sweet and womanly nature, the gentle, kindly
ways,

That caused each one who knew her, like myself, to
sing her praise,

Was the higher, truer beauty seen by eyes that see
in sooth,

All shining like a diadem, to crown her maiden
youth—

And so Bob Brown he loved her with honest, manly
truth.

Yes, Bob, he loved her truly, with the faith of all his
heart ;

She was his *one* of all the world, to him that subtle
part

That made his very self complete, and fated was to be,
Unto the arch of all his life, the final stone and key.

And in his heart of hearts he knew his fate, for good
or ill,

All hung upon the single strand of Aggie's love and
will.

But Aggie she returned his love in her own sweet,
gentle way,

And her ways were soft, and feminine, and true as
light of day ;

And yet her bright young maiden love had just one
shadowy mark—

She'd some strange horror of strong drink, some
memory grim and dark ;

For when Bob told of his jovial nights her eyes would
fill with tears,

Her kind and gentle heart would thrill with strange
foreboding fears.

Bob would loudly promise then, that for his Aggie's
sake,

The abstainer's pledge in a week, or two—well, some
time soon—he'd take ;

And numbers of such promises quite readily he'd make.

And yet their love, it seemed to me, had always
something strange,

Some quality a little queer, and out of human
range.

I knew a lot about their love, that's how this story
comes,

For I was a friend of Aggie's, and Bob and I were
chums ;

And Bob he used to tell me of strange feelings that
had grown

Along with his love for Aggie, and feelings he ne'er
had known

Before. "For instance," he would say, "I always
feel, and know,

When I'm to meet with Aggie, then, no matter where
I go,

I know by this strange feeling I will see her ere I
sleep.

I can't explain the feeling, nor can I ever keep,

E'en when the feeling's on me, any record of the
same,

Although I've tried, nor can I give the feeling even a
name.

'Twas only Friday of last week it came upon me
strong,

And then, I said, this time, at least, I'm sure the
feeling's wrong,

For to a job near Maryhill I had been sent that day,
And worked till ten at night before I took my home-
ward way.

At eleven I reached Cowcaddens, the feeling on me
still,

When hurrying on through Cambridge Street, I felt
the well-known thrill—

And there I met my Aggie, coming down from
Garnethill !

“Then as for dreams !—now this, old friend, I'd only
tell to you,

I sometimes dream of Aggie, and all my dreams come
true—

Now tell me what you think of this—has it any sort
of sense?”

Replying to all which, I thought, to have at his ex-
pense,

A bit of chaff, but looking up and seeing in his eyes
A look of earnest feeling, then my humour would not
rise,

And all the chaff intended by my wit it never comes,

For, as I said before, I think, Bob Brown and I were
chums.

“Perhaps,” quoth I, “The human soul, when meeting
its true mate,

Hath some electric links that join and act upon their
state,

I’ve read in old Philosophies ideas of that kind,
And so there may be something that has never been
defined,

Mesmeric influence, magnetism, call it what we will,
Unseen by eyes of outer sense, its action secret, still.
So, thus I tried, as best I could, his problem to
explain—

Who knows? Perhaps there is a something follows
in the train

Of all true, earnest, human love beyond the common
brain.

PART SECOND.

THE COURSE OF TRUE LOVE.

A year, or so, passed over us, and then there came a
change
Upon our land, and not for good, affecting all the range
Of industry, and labour ; and it was an evil stroke,
That dimm'd the sunshine of our lives, for we were
working folk.
The weaving mills, like others, got their share and
something more,
While the black wave of depression swept our land
from shore to shore ;
And scores of Aggie's comrades, as each fortnight
came about,
Were pay'd away for lack of work, and hundreds
turned out
Upon the streets of Glasgow. Aggie Craig, and such
as she,

Being favourites, or good workers, were kept on still
to see

If times would mend, and were upon the "Half-time"
list enrolled—

Half-time! unenviable life—a life nor hot nor
cold,

And the story of its misery hath never yet been
told.

Of thousands who were turned out, Aggie, and Bob,
and I,

Could name six girls who went away a newer life to
try

In the mills of Philadelphia, to the free United States.
Succeeded too, like thousands such, who seek for
brighter fates

In that broad land of welcome, holding out its kindly
hands

To the toiling sons and daughters from all the older
lands.

But the girls who in thousands are turned upon the
street,

With last small dole of wages—a sum scarce fit to
meet

One week of life's necessities—where go such helpless
lives?

How live they through the long black days? who
marks each girl that strives

For bare existence? Nay, whose hands are stretched
out then to save,

Or hold one young girl's head above the world's cruel
wave?

Oh, answer me this riddle, if it's one we dare unfold,
Ye mighty Provosts, councillors, and all the bailies
bold,

And ye who eat the people's bread with hearts so
hard and cold.

* * * * *

It chanced that of the girls who left Glasgow for the
States,

Two of them were Aggie's friends, for years, too,
factory mates;

And girls, that were like Aggie's self, of good and
gentle ways,

On Sundays going to church with her, and on even-
ings of week days

Working together making frills, or trimming of a hat;

And so it came their absence made her spirits dull
and flat.

For Aggie's home was quiet, living with an old maid
aunt

In a little house in Florence Street, their means being
somewhat scant.

She'd lost her parents long ago, when but a tender
child,

And the grim old maid, for the orphan's sake, grew
womanly and mild.

The child proved to her lonely home a little white-
winged dove,

And filled what had been hard and cold with kindly
human love.

So now she in her helpless age was reaping her reward
In Aggie's loving tenderness, and filial regard ;

And in that house, 'twas curious to note in one's own
mind,

When Aggie she would tend her in some office love
designed,

To see that dour old face light up, and grow so soft
and kind.

At this time Bob insisted upon marrying right away,

But Aggie, with much kindness, was forced to say
him nay ;

She said she could not leave her aunt alone now in
her age,

To which impetuous master Bob got into quite a rage,
And said he didn't intend she should—he'd take old
aunty too !

But here I joined with Aggie, for I thought it might
not do ;

"You both," I said, "can easily wait till better times
arrive"—

For Aggie was yet in her teens, and Bob not twenty-
five.

And Aggie had other reasons, good reasons of her own,
Until full pays had come again, and the times had
better grown,

She couldn't afford, poor little lass, to buy the trifling
things,

The woman-gear that every bride to her new house-
hold brings.

"And so, although I love dear Bob," she told a friend
with tears,

"Before I gang wi' empty hands I'll wait for twenty
years"—

To those who know our Glasgow girls this matter
plain appears.

She'd always been a religious lass, in a calm and quiet
way,

The which both Bob and I admired, and loved to hear
her say

Her girlish lectures to us both, how earnest she'd
appeal

To what she called our sense of right, and with what
ready zeal

We'd promise reformation, all which pleased her
wonderous well.

But lately there had come a change, a change I grieve
to tell,

By which her warm religious thought so cold and
cruel grew :

I rather think she'd taken up with some fanatic crew,
Revivalistic folk so called—those that so boldly tell
Our several chances as to Heaven, and the other place
as well.

And Aggie's bright religion, of which we were so fond,
That sparkled o'er her sweet young life like lilies on
a pond,

Became, alas ! as withered leaves, through which the
cold winds moaned !

And with this moral change that came, her horror of
strong drink

Increased, and grew quite morbid, I have even seen
her shrink,

And turn pale, and tremble, when by accident we'd meet
With some poor toper staggering home. And Bob
she'd sometimes greet

With eager, questioning, frightened eyes, if he might
chance to laugh

At this same sight, or mark it in his ever ready chaff.
For Bob himself had somehow been so wonderfully
slow

To implement the promises he'd made so long ago.
He'd never yet given up those nights of social inter-
course

With friends, and fellow-craftsmen, it would seem he
wanted force,

Or power, and will of character, on this one point
alone,

And which although I wondered at could never quite
condone.

And yet he'd promise readily some day to call a halt,
For well he knew in Aggie's eyes it was his only fault,
And often made foreboding thoughts her gentle
breast assault.

There came to us another change, when Aggie's aunt
fell ill,
And, the better then to nurse her, Aggie left the mill.
At first we thought 'twas nothing, but just a trifling
cold,
As old folks all are subject to, but Aggie soon was
told,
In kind words by the doctor, that his poor old
patient's care,
And toils of life were nearly o'er, and so in truth
they were.
So Bob, and I, and other friends, helped Aggie all we
could,
And that was but of small account, for, come or go
who would,
'Twas Aggie's self, and no one else, was ever by the
bed
With ready hand, and kindly arm, to raise the weary
head,

To moisten fevered lips, and all the little wants attend,
That now were growing less, and less, as nearing to
the end.

A week, and something less, and then the old heart
got relief,

And slept the sleep of rest, and left our Aggie to her
grief.

So thus it was the old maid passed from human toil
and need,

Her end as sweet, and gentle, as if it was decreed
In tenderest love, by Him who would not break the
bruised reed.

'Tis curious how mishaps, at times, behind each other
lurk ;

A few more days, and Aggie Craig was going back to
work,

When Mary Lee, her neighbour lass, in hurrying
anxious way,

Came in to tell the doleful news—the mill was closed
that day.

That night we held a council, and Aggie sat between,
And Bob said—"Jack, and Aggie, I am sure 'tis
easily seen

There's only one course open now, for Aggie, and for
me,

And that's just to 'put in the cries,' that married we
may be.

So there, what say ye both to that, try better if you
can."

"Yes, Aggie, Bob is right," I said, "and I'll be your
'best man,'

And Mary Lee your maid, what else, lass, can you
do?"

And Aggie sat between us, with her eyes so brown
and true,

She did not hang her head and blush, with any girlish
freak,

But looked at us quite steadily ere she began to speak.
She took then, from her pocket, a letter in her hand,
And said—"Now Bob, and you too Jack, you both
must understand

We must think on some other plan, this mayna be
just yet——"

Bob jumped upon his feet at once, began to fume and
fret—

"Oh, Bob, just hear me out," she said, "give me one
favour, dear,

And that's before we're married to work another year."

"Another year," cried Bob, "a year of youth and life
to waste—

But hold, my lass, I have you now, so don't be in such
haste,

How are you going to work a year, when every Glas-
gow mill

Is either closed, or on half-time, and will be so until
Both you and me, for aught we know, are toddling
down the hill?"

Then Aggie took her letter, and her eyes they filled
with tears,

As if what she was going to do was done with
grievous fears ;

With low, unsteady voice, then of that letter she
relates

That it was one she'd lately got from her friends out
in the States—

Then read it to us sitting there, we listening, Bob
and I.

The writer told how pleasantly the time went passing
by

Out there in Philadelphia, and in a girl's way

Explained the new conditions of their lives, how every
day,

Although it brought a daily task, it brought to them
as well,

A fair and generous recompense, and, oh, the truth to tell,
A change from former drudgery—"yet still the whole
day long

We like to sing while at our work some bonnie
Brig'ton song.

And, Aggie, when our work is done, we turn out awful
swells,

You'd think, to look at us, we were real Sauchiehall
Street belles!

Now, Aggie lass, just think of this, and then you too
will come,

We save more wages in one year than in ten we could
at home,"

And these, the last words Aggie read, struck Bob's
heart like a bomb.

It now was plain to Bob and I, quite plain, what
Aggie meant;

Bob's face it changed in colour, and his brow grew
hard, and bent,

A moment's pause, and then he spoke—"Yes, Aggie,
this is well,
I see you're for America, the next word then's fare-
well—
Farewell to all the hopes, and dreams, and years of
foolish pride,
That have been all so dear to me, which you can put
aside
So cruelly and coldly—can this be just or meet?—"
But Aggie interrupted here—she rose upon her feet
And placed her arm around Bob's neck, with modest,
loving mein,
And with her right hand stroked his hair, as I have
sometimes seen
A woman pet an angry child,—“Oh, Bob, don't make
so hard
The way for me that I must go—I need your love to
guard
And help me in my task, instead of standing in the
way ;
And then, dear Bob, and you too, Jack, I'm sure
you've heard me say
That one short year is all I want for what I've got to
do,

Then surely your own heart can tell how I'll come
back to you."

So on, and on—this, and much more, by both of them
was said ;

When Aggie hadn't arguments she stroked Bob's hair
instead.

And so poor Bob gave in at last, but with some secret
fear,

Yes, gave consent.

* * * * *

In one short week we stood on Greenock pier,
Both Bob and I, to see her off, and when the time
drew nigh,

I said, with both her hands in mine—"Good luck,
lass, and good-bye"—

And turned away. Then with a sob to Bob she
fondly clings—

The captain cries, "Quick, all on board!" and then
the last bell rings.

Last farewells 'mongst the crowd around, and many
a bitter tear,

White handkerchiefs, white faces, that in one strange
blur appear,

And then with sad hearts Bob and I are left on
Greenock pier.

PART THIRD.

SEPARATION.

The weeks and months that followed had in them
quite a change,
For Bob and I, and several things, became to us as
strange,
That late had been familiar. And Bob, too, soon
regained
His wonted spirits, and his heart that had with grief
been pained
For three whole weeks, I think it was, grew light,
and full of fun,
The day on which a letter came first from his absent
one.

We mostly spent our idle time together, he and I,
For the day he parted Aggie he had also said good-
bye
To all his old convivial nights, the story, and the song,

Although, I think, to Aggie Craig the honour should
belong

That wrought that wonderous change in him—before
she went away

He promised her from that time forth, until the happy
day

They'd meet again, he'd never touch another pint of
beer.

But then I know he did it just his Aggie's heart to
cheer—

And many a wondrous plan he laid to pass that
dismal year.

He told me of his new laid schemes, and one of them
was this—

That he'd begin to save and scrape, and not one pay
would miss

Without more adding to his store. 'Tis curious, but
true,

The once too liberal Bob became quite stingy, and a
screw.

He said he would let Aggie see he'd save as well as she,
That there was money in Glasgow town as good as
o'er the sea.

(For Aggie, 'mongst the first of all the cheery news
she sends,

She told of getting work at once, along with both her
friends.)

And so, to carry out his plans, he worked like any
slave,

And he, who lax and careless of such things, began to
crave

For piece-work, and for over-time, or anything would
add

An extra half-crown to his pay. We laughed at Bob's
new fad,

And many old chums said that Bob was going to the
bad !

Of this, and many other things, Bob duly sent the
news

Once a fortnight in his letters ; and, indeed, he
wouldn't loose

The veriest of trifles in our daily history,

But wrote them all for Aggie to be sent across the sea.

Then as for Aggie, this same art was fairly understood,

To every letter got from Bob she sent one quite as
good.

Oh, those wonderous letters, flying o'er the Atlantic's
breast,

Like carrier doves on sure, swift wings that never
needed rest!

Oh, those wonderous letters, so quick to come and go,
A stream of life, and love, and faith, with ever con-
stant flow,

Between two loving, glowing hearts, and keeping them
aglow!

* * * * *

There is a matter now to tell, in this our history,
A thing Bob spoke not of to others, but told it once
to me,
A little episode that chanced to himself and Mary
Lee.

One night as he was hurrying home, through streets
so dark and dim,

A group of tawdry painted girls, in passing, greeted
him

With ribald words. He looking at them carelessly
went by,

But sudden paused—there in their midst, cowering
'neath his eye,

Stood Mary Lee. Ah, Heaven! what pity filled
Bob's honest heart!

And puzzling thought as well—would he now act the
cool, safe part

Of prim respectability, and pass upon his way?—

'Twas not in Bob. No, there and then, without a
thought's delay,

He walked right up to Mary, and caught her by the arm,
She hung her head in deepest shame, the others took
alarm

And crept away. "Oh, Mary Lee!" cried Bob,
"what means all this?"

Why are you in such company! There's something
gone amiss—

Come tell me where your home is, lass, I'll see you
safely there."

"I have no home to go to, Bob," she said, in dull
despair,

And then the Priest and Levite passed, and grimly
eyed the pair.

The girl tried to free herself from Bob's strong, firm
grip,
But he held the poor slim arm, as in fear that she
should slip
Over some black precipice ; and though against her
will,
Still firmly, but kindly, he held her arm until
He led her from the midnight streets. Bob left her
safe and sure,
Sitting by a kindly hearth, a haven calm and pure,
Protected by the sympathy of a kindly woman's heart,
Whose helpful aid for stricken ones was still its
kindest part.

Then Bob wrote to some friends of hers, and soon poor
Mary Lee
Was taken to a safer life, away across the sea ;
Bob acting as a brother might, and paying all ex-
pense—
And this was his one extravagance, but in the highest
sense

'Twas one well worthy of the cost. Though Bob
would oft pretend,
He wouldn't have done the thing at all, but only to
defend
A girl from evil who had been to Aggie Craig a friend.

* * * * *

So time sped on, and month by month, till nine of
them went by,
Of that long year of Aggie's, and Bob had ceased to
sigh
About its weary length, and in his own peculiar way
Had planned the time of her return, arranged it to a
day—
Had even about her passage home all settled calm
and cool—
She'd sail home by the *White Star* Line, and land in
Liverpool,

When he and I some holidays would take and meet
her there.

He planned all this, did true Bob Brown, yea, some-
thing far more rare.

'Twas this—he came one night to me with big im-
portant mien,

Concerning Aggie I knew of course, for Aggie was
his queen ;

With certain airs of secrecy he spread before mine
eyes

A document to give, he said, to Aggie a surprise.

Upon examination the paper proved to be

An order on the *White Star* Line, for Aggie, so that
she

Would have what for a lonely girl would surely be a
boon,

The luxury, and comfort, of travelling home saloon.

It chanced that Aggie's Glasgow friends, some little
time before,

Had gone from Philadelphia, and Aggie did implore
To leave, and go along with them—all three to go in
quest

Of better work and wages, to some town further west.

But Aggie she refused to go, being pleased with
where she was,
And so the two set off themselves. This proved to
be the cause
Of Aggie's leaving where the three had boarded up
to this,
And changing to another house; where at first she
seemed to miss
Her former comrades, but, quite soon, she fell into the
ways
Of this new house—and those same ways I'm sure
they didn't raise
That house in Bob's eyes or in mine; we found them
soon to mean
The ways of Moody and Sankey, only ten times more
extreme.
And Thirty-six, North Avenue, was Aggie's new
address,
A simple matter in itself, but full of much distress.
And soon the effect of this new home was in her
letters shown,
Which didn't improve them very much, but Bob's
love wouldn't own
That they were any different, in tenderness, or tone.

But still the letters went and came, and never missed
a post,

And Aggie's punctuality was Bob's great pride and
boast.

Then in his letters he himself had started a new theme,
The great one of House Furniture, and what would
Aggie deem

As necessary he should buy, in way of household goods?
All this, and more, they wrote about, those two in
various moods,

All this—when Bob came in one day with startled
face and pale—

It was the day he always came his last news to retail—
“Old friend,” said he, “there's something wrong,
Aggie has missed the mail.”

And so the course of true love, that never did run
smooth,

No, never yet in palace, court, nor e'en in peasant's
booth,

Now took with Bob and Aggie—the cruel, crooked
flow—

With two such hearts 'tis hard to think how that it
should be so!

Yes, Aggie missed the mail at last, and missed the
next—and next—

And still the next; and with poor Bob, with every
known pretext,

I did what lay within my power to argue down his
fears.

Of course he wrote quite calm at first, but that soon
disappears,

And then he deluged every mail with letters short and
long—

Now petting Aggie, in the next upbraiding her with
wrong.

And so his moods go changing, like a leaf blown in
the breeze;

He writes, and fills his envelopes with incoherencies.

Poor fellow, how I pitied him!—that waiting time
all through

Was filled with pain for both of us; and he and I
well knew

That just to wait, and hope, and wait, was all that
we could do.

But why extend the story here, or why prolong its
pain?

Enough to tell the cruel fact, that never more again
Did Bob receive a letter from his darling Aggie's
hand ;

And reason of the mystery we couldn't understand.
We wondered, and conjectured, and thought of many
things

As cause for Aggie's silence, but nothing to us brings
One bit of explanation ; nor, in the least degree,
Can solve the curious riddle, or clear the mystery.
And so, at last, Bob came to me, and looking rather
queer—

" Oh, Jack," he said, " I've given in, I cannot longer
bear

The pain of this suspense, and let who chooses jeer,
or scoff,

Or call me foolish, what care I ?—to-morrow I am off."

" Off where ?" I asked. " Of course to Philadelphia,"
said he,

For I'd a curious dream last night, and in it I could
see

My Aggie's self as plain as if she stood before us
now—

Old friend, my Aggie's in distress, I saw it on her
brow,

She held her two arms out to me, and called me by
my name,

And if I didn't go at once I'd surely be to blame."

His looks and words they staggered me, but I couldn't
say him nay ;

I only said—" Bob, I'd advise, before you go away,
That you should wait another month, and by that
time, who knows

What may turn up? a week more might, for all we
know, disclose

The whole affair." But Bob got up, and slowly shook
his head ;

"To-morrow there's a steamer sails from Greenock
pier," he said,

" For which, of course, I must prepare." Even so he
carried out

His new resolve, without a thought of falter, or of doubt.

He just looked in next morning to my workshop where
I stood,

Held out his hand, and said Good-bye, in the new and
quiet mood

That late had grown upon him. Then I followed to
the street,

And tried to say some cheery words about when next
we'd meet.

Another tight grasp of the hand, we'd nothing more
to say,

And then my old chum left me, and went upon his
way;

I watched his figure while in sight, and the morn was
cold and grey.

PART FOURTH.

NUMBER THIRTY-SIX, NORTH AVENUE.

Then off to Philadelphia Bob hurried on his way,
With but one purpose in his mind, ever present night
and day ;
He never paused one single hour, from Glasgow, till
at last
He stood in Philadelphia. The impatience that
harassed
His heart for all those weary weeks, began now to
abate,
Because, he felt, that now he was near present with
his fate.
And so, instead of rushing, as he'd thought of all
along,
To seek out Aggie's home at once, he walked just
through the throng
Of those strange streets. He came at last by chance
to Brand's Hotel,

And taking up his quarters there, and dining not too
well,
And, asking from a waiter, he was shown the simplest
way
To Thirty-Six, North Avenue, and there, in light of
day,
He stood before that house, and thought 'twas like
some acted play.

'Twas in a curious rambling street, full two miles
long, and more,
That Bob found Thirty-Six at last, and stood before
the door.
His fevered lips were pale and set, his very soul was
moved,
But never paused, not even in thought, and in his
heart approved
All that he hitherto had done, and then was going to do,
And so he knocked, and firmly, and his knock was
answered to.
He heard a coming footstep, slow and ponderous it
was,
He heard it come close to the door, and then it made
a pause,

And then he had a feeling, that went creeping through
his nerves,
Of being gazed at ; next, the door unlocks, and slowly
swerves
A little way apart, and with the handle in his hand,
A man stands facing Bob—a man whose face was
white and bland,
Oh, so white and bland it was—a sort of flabby white —
The broad, deep lips, the narrow eyes, all plainly seem
to write
A something loathesome to Bob Brown, which filled
him curiously
With a sickness of antagonism in some unreasoning
way,
And a knowledge that his fate had come with now
no more delay.
Bob's voice it sounded strange and odd—"Does Aggie
Craig live here ?"
And o'er the bland face, at the words, there flashed a
look of fear—
Nay, o'er his whole, tall figure, in its buttoned black
frock coat,
There shot some coward tremor, as if the words had
smote

With fear his very being ; then with action, sudden,
 quick,
He swift drew back, and closed the door, but Bob
 just caught the trick,
And placed his foot inside the door, and stopped it
 like a wedge.
One moment, holding by the door, and peering round
 its edge,
The white, bland face is seen to glare, with eyes that
 gleam and flash,
When Bob's young, powerful shoulder gives the door
 a sudden dash,
And then he stands inside the house, his Scotch blood
 all a-boil,
And the very look of his brave, bright eyes, makes
 the other man recoil.
“ What means this outrage, sir ? ” he cries, with looks
 no longer bland ;
And Bob he answers quick and firm, “ I've left my
 native land
And come to Philadelphia, travelling many a
 mile
To see and speak with Aggie Craig.” The bland one
 tried to smile,

But with a stealthy look behind, where Bob could
see the stairs ;

“ Ah, Craig, you say, there’s no one here of that
name,” he declares ;

“ You’d better, mister, try next block, the next on
your right hand,”

And speaking, moved towards the door, with looks
once more quite bland ;

Then queried Bob, “ Sir, may I ask, what your own
name may be ? ”

The man was taken aback at this—“ Oh, well, my
name,” said he,

“ My name is Ephraim Jeffers—Brother Jeffers to a
friend,”

And Bob quite coolly then replied : “ Ephraim Jeffers,
I intend

To speak with Aggie ere I leave this house, so where
is she ? ”

“ I tell you that she is not here ; and pray, sir, don’t
you see

I’d be alone—Good-day to you—you know, sir, what
I mean,”

Then made to open wide the door, but Bob stepped in
between,

And cried with low and firm voice—looking hard in
the face so bland—

“You’re a liar, Brother Jeffers, you’re a liar where
you stand.”

The white face changed with coward rage—“By
Heavens, I’ll make you pay,

Rowdy villain that you are, for the ruffian words you
say ;

Out of my way, sir, I’ll have help, if help’s within my
call,”

Then made a rush to reach the door, but back against
the wall,

With one good thrust of Bob’s strong arm, and
Ephraim got a fall.

He slowly rose upon his feet, and foam on his lips was
seen,

The ugly white of his flabby face became a livid green,
And, from some secret pocket, drew a knife with
murderous blade,

And quick, with right uplifted arm, a furious rush he
made

On Bob, with murder in his heart, and struck with
all his might ;

But Bob, prepared and ready, caught his wrist, and
held it tight,
As tight as in a blacksmith's vice, then, with the
other hand,
Caught Ephraim by the neckscarf, some kind of
broad, white band,
Which proved to Bob of service, for 'twas strong, and
held his grasp,
Till Brother Jeffers, growing limp, began to choke
and gasp.
His knees gave way beneath him, and he sank upon
the floor ;
And Bob, now in the unreasoning mood of passion,
knew no more
But just to try and choke from him his Aggie's
whereabouts,
And so did cry, "Come, tell me, man, where is she?"
and his shouts
Went ringing through the rambling house. With
every shout a shake,
With every shake the flabby limbs a limper form
would take.
The while Bob's passion madder grew ; what might
have been the end

Heaven only knows ! when on the stairs quick, hurrying
 steps descend,
And then a female form comes rushing in upon the
 scene,
Unheeded all by Bob ; and then a cry, so loud, and keen,
That somehow pierces through his soul, and his eyes,
 with startled gleam,
Look up—and he looks on Aggie as he saw her in
 his dream !
And the strangling man drops from his grasp as
 would drop a wooden beam.

“ Oh, Bob, my Bob ! ” was Aggie’s cry, and Bob’s
 arms open wide,
And o’er the unconscious Ephraim he takes a sudden
 stride,
When Aggie, with a happy cry, is clasped tight to his
 breast,
Where close she clings, and lays her head, like a bird
 that had found its nest.
“ Oh, sweetheart, I have found you ! ” was Bob’s all-
 joyful cry ;
“ Oh, Bob, my Bob ! ” she said again, with tender,
 murmuring sigh.

And then, alas ! some sudden thought—her pale brow
flushes shame—

A strong and nervous shudder seemed to shake her
gentle frame,

When quick she pushed herself from Bob, and cried,

“What’s this we say ?

Oh, Bob, farewell, this cannot be, go quick, Bob,
don’t delay ;

May God’s own mercy help us both—farewell, dear,
go away.”

Now two more women of the house came hurrying
from the stairs,

And Ephraim, coming back to life, all round about
him glares ;

The oldest of the women, with the cry, “My son, my
son !”

Began at once to help him, but the other younger
one,

With much amazement in her eyes, came quick to
Aggie’s side

Protectingly, then round on Bob her angry glances
chide,

And seem to look upon him as some intruder there.

And yet, some look about her, struck Bob as kind and fair :

And said she, "Dear Sister Agnes, what's the meaning of all this ?

Has this young stranger frightened thee, or spoken aught amiss ?"

"Oh, Sister Alice, this is Bob," poor Aggie faintly said,

And plainly Alice by the news was also filled with dread.

"Oh, what's the meaning of all this"—and Bob looked round them all,

And Ephraim, with a sickly look, was leaning by the wall ;

"What means all this ? will some one tell, in pity to me here ?

Aggie here's my wife betrothed, and yet in pain and fear,

Instead of joy, she meets me now—oh, tell me, Aggie, lass,

Are you bewitched that our old love has come to such a pass ?"

Then took her in his arms again, and kissed her on the lips—

Poor Aggie, pale, and fainting—when Ephraim madly
grips

At Bob once more, as if the embrace his frenzy raised
again ;

“Foul sinner that you are,” said he, “now can’t you
see the pain

Your giving to our household here ; we know thee,
man, too well—

Scoundrel, rowdy, DRUNKARD—all your sins we’ll
name and tell

Before your face—go ! leave my house, and take with
thee thy strife—

Yes ! you’re Bob Brown of Glasgow, *but Agnes Craig’s
my wife !*”

And the blow struck Bob as it was meant, and pierced
him like a knife.

* * * * *

“Oh, Aggie, can this thing be true—oh, Aggie, won’t
you say ?”

The only answer that she gave, she turned her head
away,

And then, with loud, heart-broken cry, she sank prone
at his feet ;
At sight of which his heart grew cold, and almost
ceased to beat,
And staggering, like a drunken man, he passed out to
the street.

How Bob Brown passed the next few days 'tis rather
hard to tell—

In fever, and in madness, for it chanced in his hotel
He met in with an Irish heart, whose ready help and
aid

Was then his only comfort ; but such comfort, I'm
afraid,

Was rather questionable, being mostly brandy-neat—
“Come, patience, my poor boy,” he'd say, “this'll set
you on your feet.”

PART FIFTH.

CONCLUSION.

In three more days Bob found himself at Thirty-Six
once more ;

This time it was Sister Alice who opened him the
door ;

She met him with a tearful smile, yet friendly, too,
and sweet,

And led the way to a room within, and bade him take
a seat.

To name her by her soft, quaint name, Bob naturally
fell ;

“ Good Sister Alice,” then said he, “ now won’t you
kindly tell

Aggie Craig to come to me, for one last interview ? ”

“ Ah, brother, you are asking me a thing I cannot do,
For Sister Agnes stricken lies, and sick, within her
room,”

And Bob, whose eyes had shown some hope, were
dimm'd again in gloom.

"But let your heart be comforted," quoth Alice,
"who may tell?

I even may arrange for you when Sister Aggie's
well,

So, brother, leave your faith with me, and the name
of your hotel."

His visit here, however, had this result to show,
It made quite plain 'twas treachery from which the
cruel blow

Had come upon their two young lives, for Alice much
could tell;

So Bob found out that his own case was Aggie's case
as well,

And Aggie ceased to get his letters at the self-same time
That her own letters ceased for Bob; while added to
this crime

Was that of cruel scandal—for, by means unknown
to me,

The story of Bob's rescue of the girl Mary Lee
Had gone to Brother Jeffers' ears, and, twisted from
the truth,

Was told by him to Aggie in such terms that all her
youth,

And purity, and maidenhood, was sickened unto
death—

(God save us all from scandal, and its foul and
poisonous breath !)

And to this hateful story there was added one thing
more,

That Bob had turned drunkard too.

A little time before

All this our Aggie had become a sister of the sect,

Of which the saintly Ephraim was one of the elect,

Some kind of priest, and leader, too, though here we
may remark

To common Philadelphian minds that still were in the
dark,

He merely was a flabby man, some kind of postal
clerk.

But he, alas ! for our tale, in a vision of the night,

Was commanded by the spirit, speaking words of
light,

That Aggie was to come and be to him his wedded
wife,

An ever present strength and aid in the work of the
New Life !

He made this known before the sect, who hailed it
with applause,

As showing spiritual progress ; then, according to
their laws,

They straightway wedded Agnes to Brother Ephraim,
All which to Aggie's grief-smote heart was something
strange and dim.

When Sister Agnes told of this, Bob cried aloud in
rage,

"Nay, brother, I can tell to thee a something may
assuage

Your anger. Know that marriages with us are not
as those

Mere marriages of sinful earth, that with this life
doth close,

But ours are marriages for Heaven."* Yet this, to
poor Bob's mind,

Was but small comfort ; Ephraim's soul, and nature,
was defined

* From which it would appear to have been a sect something
after the manner of the Shakers.

So plainly in his heavy lips, and in his narrow eyes—
And yet, to think with Alice, Bob for every comfort
tries.

Then, in return, Bob told to her the truth of all the
tale,
Exposing all the treacherous lies—in this he did not
fail—
And so he rose and left her, and bade the girl to
say
Some words of hope and comfort to poor Aggie ; then
away
Along the strange and busy streets, and sadly does
he wend,
Till wearied out ; then to the hotel his wandering
footsteps bend,
To try, alas ! the fiery cure of his sympathetic friend.

And next, he waited four days more, as patient as he
could,
Expecting still some word, or sign, for so he under-
stood
That Sister Alice meant ; but, wearied out with wait-
ing, once again

He went to Thirty-Six—alas! to find increase of
pain—

The house all closed, a notice up: *This house to let or
sell.*

So Ephraim had gone off—but where? no one about
could tell,

For some time after this 'tis hard correctly to relate
What may have been Bob's story, or what his mental
state;

He seems to have passed many days in wanderings,
up and down,

In frantic searchings through the streets of all the
endless town.

In 'dull-eyed, brooding, hopeless mood, or mad with
noisy rage,

And brandy—brandy through it all, for naught else
could engage

Or lift his mind out from his grief—alas! let's end
the page.

* * * * *

One morn Bob's Irish friend came to his room with a
noisy rush,

"Get up, my boy, get up, here's news will make your
pale cheek flush ;

Your enemy, he's done for now, hurroo ! sure his race
is run,"

Then waved, like a banner o'er his head, that morn-
ing's *New York Sun*.

"You listen to this, my boy," said he, then read, how,
for some time,

The police of Philadelphia had been puzzled by a
crime

Of letter-stealing. How the thefts had all been traced
right to

The Philadelphia Office, where, mysteriously, the
clue

Was lost. Then how, by accident, some workmen
sent to fix

An empty house—North Avenue, Number Thirty-
Six—

Found hid beneath a bed-room floor, despoiled of their
contents,

All of the missing letters. With some curious com-
ments,

The paragraph explained as how there also had been
found

A packet of love-letters 'mongst the others, but what
ground

Or object the purloiner had in keeping them none
knew,

All written by some Glasgow man, to some young
woman who

Had come to Philadelphia. "Oh, wicked, heartless
wrong,"

Poor Bob here interrupted, "but I knew it all along,
Aye, from the day I first looked on his false and
treacherous face."

"Bad luck to him." cried his Irish friend, with the
ardour of his race.

Ephraim Jeffers was made prisoner with little loss of
time,

Arraigned—convicted. Being asked a reason for his
crime,

With sanctimonious air, and phrase, quite coolly he
explained,

That with the proceeds of his crimes he gloriously had
aimed

To found a new religious sect. The judge thought all
such dreams
And holy aims could not be brought to justify such
means,
So gave him five years' privacy to elaborate his
schemes.

A few more waiting days for Bob, and lo! he once
again
A letter got from Aggie's self—a letter full of
pain,
As shown by many signs therein; each blur and stain
could tell
Of tearful eyes and trembling hand. She bade a last
farewell,
And said that she and Alice gone together had found
rest
In a kindly Shaker village, that lay away out west,
But where she would not tell. And last, she bade
him soon return
To home, and friends, and homely ways; "And, oh,
Bob, do not mourn,
For through our grief of parting here we'll both the
better prize

Our meeting where the Perfect Love will dry all
weeping eyes.

Good bless you, dear, good-bye"—oh, world of sorrow-
ful good-byes.

* * * * *

So thus to Bob's love story there came an end of all ;
The news of which he sent to me in an ill-writ
rambling scrawl

I didn't like the look of, and by return of mail
I wrote and asked him to come back, imploring him
to sail

On board the first ship bound for home, so hoping
that he'd come,

I waited many weary weeks, still praying that the
sum

Of all those evil days were o'er, when one day came
to me

A strange official packet, which I opened dubiously,

To find my own last letter there—my heart it gave a
stound—

For on the envelope was stamped in glaring red :

NOT FOUND—

And then I lost all trace of him ; and the wheel of
years went round.

De Author to Hys Booke.

O H, lyttel booke, that I have nowe brotte forthe
 Withe labour, eke and travail, verrie sore,
 The chylde and offsprynge of my wearie braine ;
 Withe alle a parent's hope, and e'en the paine,
 Into the worlde I sende thee from my doore
 With Benedicite !—what canne I more ?

For inne the worlde thou wilt surlie meete
 What chaunced to better bookes ofttimes before,
 Colde hearted strangers, who wille frowninge greete
 Your modeste presence, or wille passe you bye
 Inne colde disdainne, unworthie of their eye—
 Ah ! feares for thee do fille my heart's deepe core.

Butte here, atte home, I'll watch when thou art gone,
 So Fare-thee-welle—nowe go—Godde speede thee on.





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